

Amman protesters demand U.N. intervention in Chechnya

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — About 200 Jordanian women and children mostly of Chechen origin on Tuesday staged a demonstration in front of the U.N. offices in Amman demanding an immediate end to the Russian military intervention in the breakaway Chechen republic.

Holding aloft banners denouncing the two-week-old Russian military assault on the republic and siege of the capital Grozny, the protesters called for immediate United Nations intervention to end the crisis in the Caucasian republic.

It was the latest demonstration by the 15,000-strong Jordanian Chechen community in support of Chechen President Dzhokhar Dudaev, who has challenged Russian domination of his republic.

"Russia got out of Chechnya," said a banner held by a small girl who had a white bandana dotted with red to symbolise the Chechen fighters injured in the fighting with Russian troops.

Another poster had a caricature of Russian President Boris Yeltsin with a gun pointed at his head.

The protesters dispersed peacefully after handing over a memorandum addressed to U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali and handed over to an official at the United Nations office.

The memo, signed by Said Beano, chairman of the Jordanian Committee for the Support of the People of the Independent Caucasian Chechen Republic, called on Dr. Ghali to use his "goodwill and effort to stop of the Russian army, which is exercising its might against the peace loving and fiercely independent Chechen nation."

Recalling the history of the Chechens as the "original Caucasian race which inhabited Chechnya for several thousands years" and a people who has paid a heavy price for their freedom, the memorandum said that the "current struggle for the independence of Chechnya is not an internal affair of the Russian Federation."

"It is the exercise of the right every nation to live in freedom and peace, including all the nations of the Russian Caucasus which have suffered from Russian colonialism for almost 150 years," said the memo, a copy of which was made available to the Jordan Times.

"This nation lost 75 per cent of its population resisting the Russian invasion in a long fight for freedom during the period 1785-1864. In 1918, Chechnya and other neighbouring nations formed the independent federal republic of North Caucasus which was recognised by many European countries including

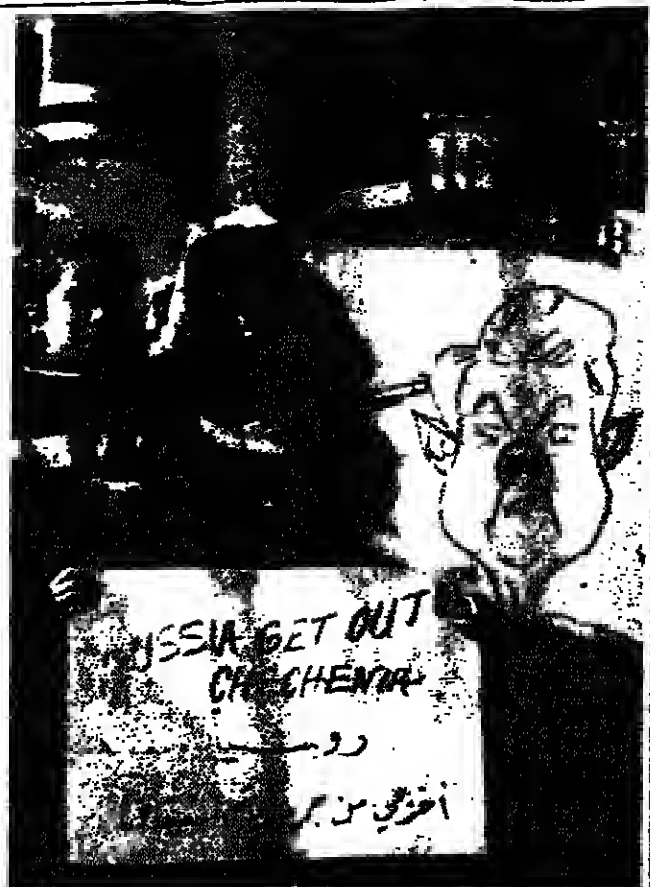
Bolshevik Russia," it said.

"However, communist Russia invaded this republic, in 1922, this time resulting in the loss of 50 per cent of the Chechen population. Again, in 1944, Stalin deported the whole Chechen nation to Siberia where 50 per cent of the population perished from hunger, disease and genocide. Those who managed to survive this holocaust were allowed to return to their ancestral homeland in 1957."

"We all recognise the great contributions made by President Yeltsin towards the abolishment of the evil communist system and the dismantling of the Soviet Union empire giving a nominal independence to the CIS member states," the memo said. "However, his recent actions against the Republic of Chechnya resulting in the killing of a large number of children, women and elderly people is not compatible with human rights or with wise and stable leadership."

"Mr. Yeltsin, might be behaving like an old Russian Tsar, but what is surprising is the negative position taken by the world at large towards the independence of Chechnya in considering this issue as an internal Russian affair," it added.

"Many of us in Jordan and the Arab World are beginning to raise 'questions' as to how the U.N. agreed that Russia has the



Children holding banners denouncing the Russian military intervention in Chechnya stage a protest in Amman on Tuesday (photo by Youssef Allani)

right to "colonise and enslave whole nations forever," why the world support the freedom of the Baltic countries while denying it others, and "will the United Nations ever be able to consistently live up to its humanitarian character," said the two-page memo.

Noting that the Jordanian committee in support of Chechen independence includes Muslims as well as

Christians, the memo said: "We are surprised by the absence of any United Nations peace efforts in the North Caucasus region, particularly when civilians are indiscriminately bombed and exterminated."

"We look forward to seeing the United Nations, under your guidance, involvement in bringing freedom and peace to this troubled North Caucasus region," it concluded.

Lebanese suspect in bombing blames Israel

Israel

BEIRUT (AFP) — A Lebanese woman in Israel's pay was arrested in connection with a deadly bombing here last week which killed four people, including a key Hizbollah security chief, a high-ranking Lebanese official said on Tuesday.

The official, who declined to be named, told AFP that the investigation into the Dec. 21 bombing in Beirut's southern suburbs revealed that an "Israeli network" was behind the attack.

A Lebanese woman was arrested and testified that an Israeli officer headed the alleged network whose aim was to carry out a string of bomb attacks in Lebanon, the official said.

The woman's Lebanese husband, who is also a member of the gang, fled to Israel's self-declared "security zone" in South Lebanon after the bombing.

Two other people who were arrested following the attack have been released after questioning.

The blast killed four people including Fawad Moghnieh, a security chief in the Iranian-backed Hizbollah movement, and wounded 14 others.

The 50-kilogramme bomb was placed in the densely-populated Sfeir neighbourhood of the southern suburbs, a stronghold of Hizbollah.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Tourism banned in Egyptian desert

CAIRO (AFP) — Tourism has been banned in Egypt's desert regions for five years in order to protect endangered species of animals, Tuesday's edition of Al-Ahram daily reported. The Organisation for Environmental Protection has announced its decision which comes into effect Monday in other Arab countries, the paper said. Officially hunting is banned in the Sinai desert and Egypt's western desert region near the border with Libya. However, hunters — mainly wealthy Gulf Arabs — obtain permission to go on tourist trips into the desert and then hunt animals such as white gazelles and rabbits. In the last five years around a thousand gazelles have been killed by some 120 hunters in Egypt's western Matruh region, according to guides who accompany the hunters.

Israeli army gets first code of ethics

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The first code of ethics has been published for the Israeli army, the head of army personnel said here Monday. General Yoram Yair told a press conference the code had taken three years to draw up and "crowned the experience of several generations of Israeli soldiers and those from other armies around the world." It was based on "the traditions of the Jewish people and the state of Israel, as well as democratic values and those of the Talmud (Israeli army)," the general said. It was particularly aimed at young soldiers, he added. "The ultimate aim of Israeli troops is to defeat in war and to achieve missions assigned to them. That brings them face to face with extreme and conflicting situations when it comes to values," the code says. It calls on troops to show courage, commitment and initiative in their missions and stresses the need to respect human life.

Calves slaughtered for Palestinian police wake

GAZA (R) — The commander of the Palestinian police force in self-rule Gaza slaughtered calves and served a feast to hundreds at a funeral wake for his mother at police headquarters on Monday, a senior police officer said. "Our generous people donated three calves for free," said a police colonel, who asked not to be named. The wake was held for the mother of police chief Brigadier General Ghazi Al-Jabali, who died in Amman. The colonel said more than 2,000 people attended the feast that included the freshly-cooked veal as well as other Middle Eastern delicacies.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

17:00 Pollards
17:30 "Que Le Meilleur Gagne"
18:00 Embarkement Porte I
19:00 News in French
19:30 Practical Guide to the Universe
19:45 Varieties
20:00 F.B.I. The Untold Stories
20:30 Quantum Leap
21:15 The Deep Probe
22:00 News in English
22:30 First Circle
23:10 The Piglet Files

PRAYER TIMES

05:04 Fajr
06:28 (Sunrise) Duha
11:35 Dhuhr
14:19 'Asr
16:41 Maghrib
18:44 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swedish, Tel. 810740
Assembly of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terzian Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541

Anglican Church Tel. 630651, Tel. 628543, Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331, Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 772561, St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751, American International Church Tel. 625225, Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328, German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 644195, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932, Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691, The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

The Kingdom will be affected by a low depression, therefore, rainy weather will prevail starting Wednesday afternoon until Friday. Winds will be northwesterly moderate.

Min./Max. temp. Amman 5/18, Ajlun 11/25, Ajlun 3/18, Jordan Valley 10/23

Yesterday's high temperatures:

Amman 17, Ajlun 23, Humidity readings: Amman 50 per cent, Ajlun 40 per cent.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Amman 17, Ajlun 23, Humidity readings: Amman 50 per cent, Ajlun 40 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Fakher Beteisi 663412
Dr. Ghaleb Zaidieh 736071
Dr. Youssef Nasser 751144
Dr. Khalid Al-Sayid 666873
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdous pharmacy 778356
Al Asma pharmacy 637055
Nairook pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shamsi pharmacy 637640
Nairook pharmacy 623672
Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID:
Dr. Mohammad Al Khalili 273099
Al Quds pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:
Dr. Tareq Hijawi 985445
Khalil pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate 630341
Rescue Force 199
Rescue Force (192, 62111) 637177
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 772121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 603800
Post Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Complaints 787111
Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 810239
Central Amman Telephone 623101
Abdullah Telephone Repeater 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Int. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hammam Medical Centre 8181332
Khaldun Maternity, J. Amn 643816
Abdullah Maternity, J. Amn 643412
Jabal Amman Maternity 643262
Matthias J. Amman 634446
Palestine, Shamsun 6641784
Shamsun Hospital 669131
University Hospital 643646
Al-Mawakeel Hospital 6672379
The Islamic, Abdulla 66412737
Al-Ahli, Abdulla 6641446
Islamic, Al-Mawakeel 7731328
Al-Badri, J. Amn 7731328
Army, J. Amn 8914115
Queen Alia Hospital 6624820
Amal Hospital 674155

ZARQA:
Zarqa Gov. Hospital 0998333
Zarqa National Hospital 09986732
Beit Sana Hospital 09986732
Al-Hikmah Modern Hospital 09987979

IRBID:
Princess Beama Hospital 8127335
Gruel Catholic Hospital 8127335
Beit Al-Nadwa Hospital 8127335

AJLUN:
Princess Hays Hospital 0134111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
06:30 Ajlun (RJ)
06:30 Amman (RJ)
06:30 Beirut (RJ)
06:30 Cairo (RJ)
06:30 Damascus (RJ)
06:30 Doha (RJ)
06:30 Frankfurt (RJ)
06:30 Istanbul (RJ)
06:30 London (RJ)
06:30 Madrid (RJ)
06:30 Moscow (RJ)
06:30 New York (RJ)
06:30 Paris (RJ)
06:30 Rome (RJ)
06:30 Seoul (RJ)
06:30 Tokyo (RJ)
06:30 Zurich (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

06:30 Beirut (ME)
06:30 Cairo (MS)
06:30 Doha (QF)
06:30 Frankfurt (LH)
06:30 Istanbul (TK)
06:30 London (BA)
06:30 Madrid (IB)
06:30 Moscow (SU)
06:30 New York (AA)
06:30 Paris (AF)
06:30 Rome (EI)
06:30 Seoul (KE)
06:30 Tokyo (NH)
06:30 Zurich (LX)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:30 Ajlun (RJ)
06:30 Amman (RJ)
06:30 Beirut (RJ)
06:30 Cairo (RJ)
06:30 Damascus (RJ)
06:30 Doha (RJ)
06:30 Frankfurt (RJ)
06:30 Istanbul (RJ)
06:30 London (RJ)
06:30 Madrid (RJ)
06:30 Moscow (RJ)
06:30 New York (RJ)
06:30 Paris (RJ)
06:30 Rome (RJ)
06:30 Seoul (RJ)
06:30 Tokyo (RJ)
06:30 Zurich (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

06:30 Beirut (ME)
06:30 Cairo (MS)
06:30 Doha (QF)
06:30 Frankfurt (LH)
06:30 Istanbul (TK)
06:30 London (BA)
06:30 Madrid (IB)
06:30 Moscow (SU)
06:30 New York (AA)
06:30 Paris (AF)
06:30 Rome (EI)
06:30 Seoul (KE)
06:30 Tokyo (NH)
06:30 Zurich (LX)

HIJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman 8:00 a.m. every Monday
Arr. Amman 7:00 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in Jds per kg

Apple 700/500
Banana 680
Basil (Malabar) 620
Cabbage 800/120
Carrot 280/180
Cauliflower 440/300
Chives 340/200
Cucumber (large) 300/200
Cucumber (small) 400/40
Eggplant 340/220
Garlic 550/400
Lemon 280/180
Marrow (large) 250/180
Marrow (small) 500/300
Onion (green) 320/200
Onion (dry) 800/300
Orange 500/300
Pepper (hot) 800/300
Pepper (sweet) 500/300
Potato 300/200
Radish 280/180
Spinach 320/200
String Beans 800/600
Tomato 500/250

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losing their jobs as house guards barricades approaches their arsenals and fleets of



H.R.H. Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Tuesday visits with leaders of the Christian community to wish them and their congregations a merry Christmas.

Regent visits Christian leaders on occasion of Christmas

AMMAN (Petra) — H.R.H. Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Tuesday wished the heads of the Christian communities a merry Christmas, noting that the holiday this year coincides with the Muslim feast of Al Israa and Miraj making it a doubly joyous season for the entire Jordanian family.

Speaking during a visit to the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in Sweifeh, the Regent said he was also conveying holiday greetings from His Majesty King Hussein.

"We share with you your joy at Christmas, and together we remember the Islamic-Christian co-existence and close relations over centuries," said Prince Hassan at his meeting with Patriarch Diodoros II, Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem, Bishop Salim Sayegh, head of the Roman Catholic community in Jordan and Father Nabil Haddad, a Greek Catholic priest and head of the Jordan Caritas, as well as a group of prominent Christian citizens.

"We live as a united family in these holy lands, and we both work together towards deepening our faith in a climate characterised by affection and solidarity," said Prince Hassan.

He added that the time has come for all the world's nations to live in peace.

Referring to a message he received Tuesday from Pope John Paul II, the Regent said that the pontiff spoke of humanitarian issues, the role of women and the need to educate all members of society.

The Crown Prince said he hoped that by next Christmas the whole world would recognise the full rights of the Arab citizens living in this region and that all would enjoy a free and dignified life.

Jordan, U.S. draft extradition treaty

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordanian and U.S. officials have drawn up a draft memorandum of understanding on extradition of criminals between the two countries, Information Minister Jawad Anani said Tuesday.

Dr. Anani said the document, prepared after discussions between a senior Jordanian Justice Ministry delegation and State Department officials in Washington, had to be ratified by the two governments before its endorsement as a formal extradition treaty.

Asked what were the details of the draft accord, Dr. Anani would only say that "there are different standard forms of extradition treaties" and that particulars of the Jordanian-U.S. document would be studied by the government.

The Arabic-language daily, Al Aswaa, quoted Judge Adeeab Jalamdeh, who headed the justice ministry team to the talks in Washington last week, as saying that the draft accord listed all crimes for which extradition would be applicable.

However, it excludes political crimes and violent crimes committed against the heads of state of the two countries or any of their family members, Mr. Jalamdeh was quoted as saying.

Confirming that the two countries were involved in discussions on an extradition treaty, Justice Minister Hisham Al Tel said early this month that he expected the document to be finalised and ratified by the two governments in January.

Mr. Jalamdeh, who was accompanied by Judge Masboor Kook to the Washington talks, also told Al Aswaa that the proposed extradition treaty would not have a time limit and would take retroactive effect.

However, it would not be applicable to Jordanian Mohammad Abuequa, who is in detention in Jordan charged with killing his wife in the U.S. and fleeing with his children to the Kingdom to escape U.S. police, Mr. Jalamdeh said. He explained that no suspect or accused in Jordan under investigation by a Jordanian court would be covered by the proposed extradition agreement.

The U.S. government has sought the extradition of Mr. Abuequa, whom U.S. law enforcement authorities have accused of strangling his wife in a dispute over their two children in July. Mr. Abuequa, who was arrested by Jordanian security forces on July 20 and has reportedly confessed to the murder, is expected to be tried by a

Jordanian court. No date has been set.

U.S. law enforcement officials have visited Jordan several times to follow up on the case. The U.S. ambassador here, Wesley Egao, has said that he would continue to press the Jordanian government to extradite Mr. Abuequa.

In fact, it was the Abuequa case that prompted Jordanian-American talks on an extradition treaty between the two countries after U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, nudged by intervention by American congressmen, brought up the case during discussions with His Majesty King Hussein in July.

The two Abuequa children, a girl of six and a boy of three, were returned to the U.S. with their maternal aunt in August.

Meanwhile, officials here could not confirm or deny a report that the Jordanian

government had asked Washington to extradite Mohammad Khalifa, a Saudi Arabian national believed to be living in the U.S. and sentenced to death in absentia by the Jordanian State Security Court in a subversion trial that ended last week.

Mr. Khalifa, a close relative to Saudi/Yemeni millionaire Osama Ben Ladeo who is accused of bankrolling extremist groups in the Arab World, was sentenced to death along with 10 others in the trial. A Jordanian and an Iranian were also sentenced in absentia to death by the court.

Junior-level officials here said they were not aware of any Jordanian request for Mr. Khalifa's extradition from the U.S. At the same time, they said it was also possible that the Jordanian government could have done so.

Some dairy prices to go up; producers call off strike

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A dispute between dairy producers and the Ministry of Supply over dairy prices Tuesday ended with the producers calling off a strike planned for today.

A spokesman for the dairy producers made the announcement Tuesday following a series of meetings with ministry officials which lasted more than two weeks.

Saleh Al Ra'i, a spokesman for the producers, said that Minister of Supply Adel Qudah had agreed to raise the prices of several dairy products, including a half-kilogramme of yogurt from 210 fils to 220 fils and a half-kilogramme of labaneh

from 690 fils to 720.

The agreement stipulates that the new prices will go into effect at the start of 1995, according to Mr. Ra'i.

The dairy producers had warned that they would stop production starting today unless they were allowed to raise the prices. They complained that the prices set by the ministry no longer reflected the real cost of production and that as a result they were incurring losses.

Mr. Qudah met with a committee representing the dairy producers Monday evening during which the issue was reviewed and the producers presented proof that their production costs had risen sharply in the past

few months.

The minister said that the hike in prices of certain dairy products was necessary to enable the dairy firms to continue production.

He was quoted by the committee members as saying that the Ministry of Supply would be ready to re-examine the situation should the cost of production rise again.

Mr. Ra'i said the producers appreciated the minister's response to their demands, adding that the committee later held a meeting at the Amman Chamber of Industry and declared the strike cancelled.

Jordan has 10 major dairy firms producing about 150 to 170 tonnes of milk products



RETURNING WITH DISTINCTION: H.R.H. Prince Faisal Bin Al Hussein Tuesday returned home from the United Kingdom where he completed a one-year military training course with distinction at the British Air Force College of Bracknell for Staff and Command. Prince Faisal holds the rank of a lieutenant colonel in the Royal Jordanian Air Force.

Poultry farmers protest animal feed 'shortage'

AMMAN (Petra) — Poultry farmers gathered at the Ministry of Supply animal feed distribution centre at Sweifeh, south of Amman, Tuesday to protest what they said were insufficient amounts of feed, especially corn in the past week.

The majority of the farmers signed a petition and sent it to Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali explaining that the shortage of animal feed would adversely affect their business.

Some farmers claimed that the centre was conducting a year end inventory, and thus temporarily suspended the distribution of animal feed.

In their petition to the Prime Minister, the farmers said that they would resort to buying flour, semolina and wheat to feed their animals, adding that they feared that many of the birds would die.

The petition, which urged the premier to intervene on their behalf, said that the Ministry of Supply's practice would create what they called a black market, which, they said, would force the farmers to abandon their businesses altogether.

The farmers demanded that the distribution centres be opened and that sufficient corn be made available for sale.

In reply, Ministry of Supply Secretary General Mustafa Khleifat said that corn was in sufficient supply at the ministry's silos.

He also said that a vessel laden with 50,000 tonnes of corn is due to dock at Aqaba on Jan. 5, and the ministry has floated a tender for the importation of 100,000 tonnes of corn before the end of next month.

Mr. Khleifat said that Jordan's monthly need of corn for animal feed is 25,000 tonnes.

Noting that the ministry maintains a six-month supply of animal feed, Mr. Khleifat stressed that there was no truth in rumours that the ministry intended to raise the price of corn.

He charged that some farmers try to buy additional amounts of corn so that they can sell it in the black market, and the ministry was determined to prevent this sort of illicit activity.

Mr. Khleifat announced also that the ministry will stop selling all kinds of food stuffs and animal feed for three days starting Wednesday to allow for the annual inventory by joint committees from the ministries of Supply and Finance and the Audit Bureau.



Poultry farmers Tuesday gathered outside the Sweifeh animal feed distribution centre to protest what they see as insufficient supplies of feed (Petra photo)

Fire kills 110-year-old man

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A centenarian Monday night died tragically in Ramtha when a lit kerosene heater fell on his bed, according to Public Security Department (PSD) reports.

The victim's son told police that he had gone to pray at a nearby mosque, and when he returned home he saw smoke and fire emitting from his father's bedroom, the official said.

According to the report, the victim, identified only as A.M., (110) and physically handicapped, was

burnt beyond recognition.

"It seems that the victim wanted to crawl out of his bed and accidentally knocked over the heater which started the fire," the official told the Jordan Times.

Meanwhile, police in Amman are investigating the death of a man, who was found in his house in Misdar Street by a neighbour, PSD reports showed.

Neither the deceased nor the neighbour, a woman, were identified. The woman told police that the man, who "is believed to be in his early 70s and lives alone," had been living in isolation for the past six years.

World journalists group to meet in Amman

AMMAN (J.T.) — The International Journalists Organisation (IJO) will hold its general assembly meeting in Amman on Jan. 28 with an expected attendance of 180 journalists representing 120 nations, according to an announcement Tuesday by Jordan Press Association (JPA) President Suleiman Qudah.

It is the first time such conference is to be held in an Arab state by the IJO which was established in 1947 and is headquartered in Prague, said Mr. Qudah.

In addition the conference will be attended by delegates representing the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Arab Journalists Federation, Mr. Qudah said.

The four-day meeting, which will be held at the Amman Philadelphia Hotel, is scheduled to discuss the organisation's policies, amendments to its statutes, questions related to the protection of journalists and a report by the IJO's secretary general.

Issues concerning the journalism profession, programmes for training journalists and other related issues will also be on the agenda, he said.

The general conference will be preceded by a two-day meeting on Jan. 26 and 27 by the organisation's executive committee members, he added.

The IJO's activities and programmes for its 20,000 members are also expected to be reviewed, Mr. Qudah said.

He said preparations for the meeting are under way, and the JPA has informed the concerned government departments in the Kingdom in order to provide facilities for the conference.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Cabinet raises doctors' allowance
AMMAN (Petra) — The Cabinet Tuesday raised the doctors' allowance to 100 per cent of the base salary for specialists and 30 per cent for general practitioners, according to Health Minister Aref Batayneh. The minister said the increase was necessary to ensure equity. The raise will take effect as of January 1995, Dr. Batayneh said.

Senate refers budget to committee
AMMAN (Petra) — The Upper House of

Parliament Tuesday referred the draft fiscal budget for 1995 to its Finance Committee. The budget was passed Monday by the Lower House after a three-day debate attended by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and Cabinet ministers. The Upper House also elected Senator Ahmad Tarawneh as second deputy speaker in accordance with Article 6 of the Upper House statute. The Senate meeting under Speaker Ahmad Lawzi, also elected Qasim Obeidat as member of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee. The Senate session was attended by the Prime Minister and Cabinet ministers.

Tawjihi examinations begin

AMMAN (Petra) — A total of 84,361 students Tuesday began the first part of the tawjihi examinations organised by the Ministry of Education.

Ministry Secretary General Munther Masri said in a statement during an inspection tour of the examination halls that 6,000 teachers would start grading the examination papers Thursday at centres located in Amman, Irbid, Zarqa, Balqa, Karak and Maan.

He said that 12,000 teachers have been assigned to proctor the examination in 1,130 halls in the Kingdom.

According to Dr. Masri, 45,086 students are being tested in the literary stream, 53,044 in the scientific, 24,590 in the commercial, 5,507 in the agricultural, 2,915 in the industrial, 4,372 in the nursing, and 1,524 in the hotel management streams.

Other ministry officials toured the examination halls in other parts of the country.

Minister of Education Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh has requested the health department and the Civil Defence Department (CDD) to extend help if needed to ensure that students arrive to their assigned examination halls.

Qasim Khassawneh, head of the Examinations Department, said that the special operation room has been set up at the Ministry of Education to receive complaints and other remarks about the progress of the examinations.

Israel hopes for Gulf ties

(Continued from page 1)

Israeli plans at the expense of the Arab interests," the statement said.

Iran, which has good relations with Oman, also criticised the visit.

Tehran Radio warned that the United States and the "Zionist state had a coordinated plan to expand the sphere of capitulation to cover the Gulf Arab states."

"But the expansion of relations between the Zionist regime and Arab leaders could create questions about the legitimacy" of Arab leaders before their people, it said in a commentary.

A statement issued by a 10-member Palestinian alliance opposed to the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO)-Israeli peace deal described Mr. Rabin's visit as a "dangerous step on the road to normalisation" between Israel and Arab states.

The visit reflects the rush of some Arab regimes to implement the American-

El Khader

(Continued from page 1)

peace process and to create a new fait accompli that will cast a shadow on negotiations on the final status of the occupied Palestinian land," he said.

Ibrahim Salah, a Palestinian from El Khader, said: "I am worried about my land because we are faced with a government of gangsters."

Ephraata settlers were in no mood to ally Palestinian fears. "The Arabs think if we build here today, we will build where they live tomorrow," said 30-year-old Hen Sasson.

"They are right to be scared, because that is exactly what we will do."

WHAT'S GOING ON

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| <p>CHRISTMAS DISPLAY</p> <p>★ Bani Hamida Christmas Display with a variety of small gift items at Bani Hamida House, Jabal Amman, First Circle, Rainbow Street.</p> <p>NEWS</p> <p>★ ABC News Highlights and McNeill-Lehrer News Hour at the American Center at 5:00 p.m.</p> | <p>DIALOGUE</p> <p>★ Dialogue with artists Issa'el and Tamam Shamout at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation at 5:00 p.m.</p> <p>EXHIBITIONS</p> <p>★ Exhibition of oil paintings by Mohammad Musa at the Phoenix Gallery for Culture and Art.</p> |
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CORRECTION

The Jordan Times in its issue of Dec. 25-26 incorrectly reported that Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali received Tunisian Ambassador to Jordan Mohammad Mongi Labib. Mr. Labib is the former Tunisian ambassador. The Prime Minister in fact received current Ambassador Izzeddin Al Qarqani. The Jordan Times apologises for the error.

U.S. envoy heads to N. Korea; Pyongyang repeats spy claim

SEOUL (R) — A U.S. diplomat was en route to North Korea Tuesday to discuss the release of a captured American helicopter pilot whom North Korea says was on a spying mission when he was shot down over its territory 10 days ago.

North Korea raised the tempo by releasing a photograph it said was of Chief Warrant Officer Bobby Hall after his capture on Dec. 17. The photo shows a man in a flying kit, looking tense, with his hands up.

U.S. Cable News Network said North Korea's official news agency also released a photograph it said was of the wreckage of the helicopter. A U.S. military spokesman in

Seoul said it was too early to confirm the authenticity of the photographs.

The North has said Officer Hall is in good health but it has not allowed foreign contact with him.

Thomas Hubbard, deputy assistant secretary of state for East Asia and the Pacific, earlier left the United States on his way to North Korea to negotiate for Officer Hall's release.

The U.S. State Department said North Korea had invited a U.S. official to discuss the issue and Mr. Hubbard's mission was "to facilitate the prompt repatriation" of Officer Hall.

U.S. officials said Mr. Hubbard was expected to arrive in Seoul after midnight and to cross the heavily fortified demilitarized zone to North Korea Wednesday morning.

The United States has expressed regret at what it called an accidental intrusion by the helicopter. But North Korea said what it termed an act of espionage needed further investigation under military law.

Its official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), monitored in London Monday, said Washington must "admit its responsibility as the offender" and show a reasonable attitude "before it is too late."

It said official investigations had shown this was not an "accidental case" caused by a "mistake," but a deliberate act of espionage. "Detaining and investigating criminals is a matter related to our dignified sovereignty," it said.

"We categorically deny that it was on that kind of flight," said Jim Coles, a spokesman for the U.S. military in Seoul. "This was a routine training mission that unfortunately strayed into North Korean airspace."

KCNA said the helicopter was seven kilometres inside its territory when it was brought down in flames by a single shot in the Ipho-Ri area of the eastern province of Kangwon. It said the aircraft ignored two warning signals and tried to escape.



ONE-WOMAN EXPEDITION. Norwegian Travel Agency clerk Liv Arnesen (41) gives a thumbs-up while sitting on her sled on this recent file picture, taken in Antarctica prior to the start of her One-Woman expedition to the South Pole. Ms. Arnesen, who started the 1,150 kilometre trip on Nov. 5 at the Hercules Inlet Base, became the first woman ever to have reached the South Pole in a single-person expedition in the early Dec. 25 morning hours, sending out a message "Finished South Pole" by a satellite phone (AFP photo)

China to crack down on fake medicines

BEIJING (R) — China is to crack down on the production and sale of substandard and bogus medicines, some of which are toxic, the official China Daily said Tuesday. "Individuals and units found to produce or sell substandard medicines will be punished severely," it quoted state councillor Peng Peiyun as saying. "All units which failed to meet state requirements must be closed and the situation must be rectified within a prescribed period of time or they will be banned from business," Mr. Peng was quoted as saying at a conference of pharmaceutical administrators. More than 80,000 cases of production or sale of fake or substandard medical products have been reported in China since 1985, the newspaper said. Some of the fake medicines were toxic, it said. Beijing will begin a national inspection of medicine producers and sellers early next year and introduce a new license system to regulate the industry, it said. Rural medicine fairs dealing in items other than traditional Chinese herbs must be banned, the newspaper quoted State Pharmaceutical Administration Director Zheng Xiaoyu as saying. The government plans to provide more medical training centres for China's rural and transient population, it said.

Crimes by China's spoiled children soar

BEIJING (R) — Juvenile crime in China soared in the first nine months of this year, much of it blamed on violent films, pornographic videos and spoiled children, the Xinhua News Agency said Tuesday. "Crimes, especially serious crimes committed by the young, have been climbing significantly, with 70 per cent more relating to property and sex," Xinhua said, without giving any examples. One official blamed the increase on illegal publication of pornographic books as well as violent or pornographic videos and films, rising divorce rates and spoiled children, Xinhua said. More than 27,000 juvenile delinquents under 18 faced judicial penalties in the first nine months of 1994, Wang Jingrong, vice-president of the Supreme People's Court, told Xinhua. In all of 1993, the courts sentenced 32,000 young criminals, Wang said. Juvenile courts, which first appeared in Shanghai 10 years ago, now parallel almost every people's court across China at the county level, Mr. Wang said, adding that China now has more than 3,000 such courts.

Christmas twins have true seasonal bash

FLITCHAM, England (R) — It was a real seasonal bash for twins Lorraine and Leona Christmas, who were in hospital Monday after crashing head-on as they headed to one another's homes to deliver Christmas presents. The 31-year-old sisters, each driving her own car, collided on a narrow, icy country lane Saturday, the day before Christmas, police said. Family members told British newspapers they were delivering presents to one another. "People always say the twins always do things together," said their mother Joan Christmas. "It is remarkable they crashed into each other this time of year." "We did a double take when we first received details of the accident. We thought it was a practical joke," a police spokesman said. The two were being treated for chest injuries, whiplash and concussion at a hospital in Norfolk, Eastern England.

Smooth sailing at last for QE2

NEW YORK (R) — The QE2, which left New York in a driving storm Saturday after construction problems turned its trans-Atlantic voyage into a fiasco, has finally hit sunny skies. After being delayed 37 hours in New York to correct safety violations found by the Coast Guard, the luxury liner was en route to the Caribbean Monday in weather described by the ship's radio operator as "lovely." The trouble-plagued liner headed into 50-knot wind gusts and 25-foot (7.6-metre) waves when its Caribbean Christmas cruise finally got underway Saturday. Many of the previous groups of passengers who crossed the Atlantic to New York last week found the trip anything but enjoyable.

Armenia mayor's murder sparks crisis

YEREVAN (AFP) — Armenia has been plunged into a full-scale political crisis by the murder of the capital's charismatic former Mayor Ambartsum Galstian, who ran city hall in 1990-1992.

In protest at crime in political circles and the lack of any government probe, members of parliament have been resigning en masse after the other. Forty have stated their intention of standing down from seats, and 10 have already vacated them. They are from four parliamentary groups, mostly on the opposition benches.

The revolt had been simmering for months amid the deepening economic crisis caused by years of blockade by Azerbaijan, and boiled over when Mr. Galstian, 39, was murdered a week ago. He was chairman of the Karabakh Committee, Armenia's former nationalist movement.

Azerbaijan has been strangling Armenia economically since separatist Armenians claimed autonomy for the Nagorno-Karabakh enclave, a highland region of Azerbaijan peopled mostly by Armenians. Fighting since 1988 has cost more than 20,000 lives.

"Parliament is in an explosive political situation," national security chief David Shahnazarian warned. He said "acts of terror" were not going to stop occurring. Five MPs have been killed since 1991, out of more than 10 killings regarded as political assassinations.

The opposition in parliament is insisting that President Levon Ter-Petrosian and the security and defence ministries prepare a detailed report on crime in the country, but the authorities are resisting fiercely.

Leading the calls for a probe are the National Democratic Union of one-time Ter-Petrosian follower Vazgen Manukian, and the Revolutionary movement, with links to the Socialist International.

They both accuse Mr. Ter-Petrosian and his team of concentrating all power in their own hands since Mr. Ter-Petrosian was triumphantly elected first head of state of independent Armenia in 1991.

"The political crisis has not yet reached its apogee, and threatens to spread ever wider as elections approach," said Seiran Bagdasarian, a top member of the Dashnak leadership.

A general election is due at the end of next May, when parliament's term expires. In 1992 and 1993, opposition parties staged rally after rally and used to get more than 50,000 demonstrators out on the streets here. But their lack of a coherent political programme counted against them, and the latest gatherings this year have drawn crowds of barely 4,000 people.

Their platform amounts to no more than a call for Mr. Ter-Petrosian's new constitution.

The ruling party, the Pan-Armenian National Movement, secure with its parliamentary majority, is playing down the crisis. "The political situation is normal for a pre-electoral period," said the movement's deputy leader Ovik Igisian. "All political forces remain together over a single problem, Nagorno-Karabakh," he said.

Scalfaro tries to solve Italian political crisis

ROME (R) — President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro resumed his search for a solution to Italy's deep political crisis Tuesday as outgoing Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi maintained pressure for a return to the ballot box.

Billionaire businessman Berlusconi, toppled last week by a rebellion by his Northern League coalition partner, evoked the spectre of a "communist" takeover as he outlined his opposition to a broad-based transitional government.

Northern League leader Umberto Bossi and Rocco Buttiglione, head of the small centrist Popular Party, are willing to work with the ex-communist Democratic Party of the Left in a new government to complete institutional reform before Italians are asked to vote again.

But that prospect fills media mogul Berlusconi with dread. "We are certain about one thing: We will never let Bossi and Buttiglione hand Italy over to the communists," Mr. Berlusconi said Monday night.

Mr. Berlusconi swept to power in general elections last March after a slick campaign in which he backed free-market policies and warned of the dangers of a shift to the left.

His Forza Italia party formed an electoral alliance with the federalist League in the north and the hard-right National Alliance in the south and he regards the League's decision to break ranks as treachery.

Mr. Berlusconi is demanding a snap general election and wants Mr. Scalfaro, arbiter in Italy's deepest political crisis for nearly two decades, to reappoint him as prime minister in the run-up to polls which could be held by late March.

But Mr. Berlusconi's opponents argue that his control of television through his three private channels and his appointments at state broadcaster Rai would make it impossible to stage a fair electoral campaign.

They also argue that a new electoral system used for the first time last March is flawed and needs refining.

Mr. Scalfaro, reported to

be opposed to an early election, has the task of appointing a prime minister to head Italy's 54th government since World War II. He will meet the speakers of Italy's two houses of parliament.

The leaders of Italy's main political parties will visit the president's 16th century Quirinale Palace this week in consultations scheduled to last until Friday.

Both Senate Speaker Carlo Scognamiglio and his lower house counterpart Irene Finetti have been mentioned as possible leaders of a broad new coalition. Sen. Scognamiglio is a member of Forza Italia while Ms. Finetti is from the Northern League.

Outspoken former President Francesco Cossiga is seen as another potential prime minister while newspapers speculated Tuesday that former Milan magistrate Antonio Di Pietro could also emerge as a candidate.

Judge Di Pietro, a folk hero for his work in uncovering corruption, quit his magistrature's job earlier this month complaining that a political tug-of-war had developed over his work.

Mr. Buttiglione said the Forza Italia Party had a right to request to head a new government.

"We are moving toward the formation of a new government that will certainly not last four years — but it will surely last for more than four days," Mr. Buttiglione told reporters.

"If Forza Italia agrees that this new government should tackle Italy's most urgent problems, they not only have the right to take part in it — they also have the right to ask to lead it. They are the party with the relative majority."

Mr. Buttiglione's opening to Forza Italia marks a change of tack for the Popular Party which linked up with the Northern League to propose a no-confidence vote in parliament.

Mr. Berlusconi resigned last Thursday rather than face the humiliation of that vote and two similar ones.

Mr. Berlusconi flatly rejects the idea of a transitional government and is pushing for snap elections which he is confident his party and its allies will win.

China, Burma discuss border, economy

RANGOON (R) — Chinese Prime Minister Li Peng discussed border and economic issues with his Burmese counterpart Tuesday on the second day of a visit aimed at sealing ties with the ruling military regime.

Chinese officials said they were satisfied with the development of border trade with Burma, and the two governments urged the state and private sectors to expand burgeoning trade links, a Chinese spokesman said.

Mr. Li and Prime Minister Than Shwe, chairman of the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) that came to power in 1988 after suppressing pro-democracy protests, also discussed joint efforts to combat drug trafficking.

In a banquet speech Monday night, Mr. Li recalled that the two countries had maintained friendly relations since establishing diplomatic ties 44 years ago.

Mr. Li praised Burma's abundant harvest, including record rice production, and its "laudable efforts in maintaining national stability, promoting national reconciliation and making contacts with the outside world."

China has steadfastly supported Burma against foreign criticism for human rights abuses and is its main trading partner and arms supplier.

Gen. Than Shwe referred to the "five principles of peaceful coexistence" which characterised Sino-Burmese relations.

Burma and China earlier pledged a joint war against Golden Triangle heroin traffickers whose cross-border activities have thrived during China's 15 years of economic reforms.

Bulgarian communists win elections

SOFIA (R) — Official results confirm that the former communist Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) won an outright majority in the parliamentary election nine days ago, the Central Electoral Commission (CEC) announced Tuesday.

Five political forces will enter the new 240-seat parliament. The BSP, which changed its name from Communist four years ago, will have 125 seats, with 52 per cent of the votes.

Socialist officials have invited both parliamentary and non-parliamentary parties for talks this week on the possible formation of a coalition government.

The BSP was swept back into power by the electorate

for the second time after renouncing its 45 years of absolute rule and apparently changing its hardline policies.

Like the other resurgent former communist in Eastern Europe, the BSP now officially embraces capitalism and democracy.

The main anti-communist Union of Democratic Forces (UDF) came in second with 69 seats after winning 28 per cent of the vote.

The UDF won the last general election in 1991 and formed the first non-communist government in more than 45 years, but was forced to step down 11 months later after losing a parliamentary vote.

The UDF coalition suffered deep splits, losing a

large chunk of its disillusioned electorate.

The third political force in the new parliament is the people's union, a coalition between the Bulgarian Agrarian People's Union and the Democratic Party, which won 18 seats and 7.5 per cent of the vote. The Democratic Party was part of the UDF until two months before the Dec. 18 elections.

The movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF), mainly representing ethnic Turks, won 15 seats with 6.25 per cent of votes.

The MRF played a balancing role as the third major force in the previous parliament, helping to bring down the UDF administration in 1992.

2 killed as Haitian soldiers protest

PORT-AU-PRINCE (R) — At least two Haitian soldiers were killed in gunfire outside Haitian military headquarters Monday in the worst violence in Port-au-Prince since ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide was restored to power, a military spokesman said.

The shooting erupted during a demonstration by Haitian soldiers being sent into retirement under a plan to scale down the army, according to witnesses and U.S. military officials.

Ray Kelly, the former New York City police commissioner who heads the international police monitors in Haiti, said five people, all members of the Haitian military, were wounded in the shooting. He said he was unaware that any were wounded.

It was unclear who had fired the shots that wounded the five, Mr. Kelly and U.S. military officials said.

A spokesman at the Haitian military hospital in the capital said two of the soldiers wounded in the shooting had died. A third wounded soldier brought there from the scene was hospitalized.

The violence was the worst in the Haitian capital since American troops restored ousted President Jean-

Bertrand Aristide in October under a deal with the country's military rulers.

Under the U.S.-backed deal that restored Aristide, the army, named for many of the killings and other human rights abuses during three years of military rule, is to be restructured and sharply reduced.

"A bunch of them were to be fired today, and apparently they didn't want to go without a fight," said one American soldier.

Mr. Kelly said when the shooting began, some of the protesters broke into a weapons locker at the military headquarters.

When they emerged from the building, they were confronted by U.S. soldiers, who "fired back," he said.

More than 30 people were taken into custody, but it was uncertain how many would be charged, Mr. Kelly said.

"I think we have to let the smoke settle to see what this means," he said.

One witness, Patrick Ajenor, said the unrest started when two of the protesting soldiers slapped army chief of staff General Monville Beaubrun outside the military headquarters.

"Two soldiers attacked General Beaubrun. They

slapped him. He shot the two soldiers and they fell on the ground," Mr. Ajenor said. That account could not immediately be confirmed.

Haitian soldiers at the headquarters then opened fire with automatic weapons, according to Mr. Ajenor. Gen. Beaubrun's assistant was wounded as the general made his escape, he said.

An unidentified American soldier said some of the bullets flew across the plaza to the National Palace, where American soldiers returned fire.

Members of the multinational peacekeeping force in Haiti responded to the shooting, taking an hour to secure the headquarters. U.S. military interpreters used loudspeakers to tell Haitian military personnel to come out.

"If you don't we're going to come in the door and you could get killed. If you come out nothing will happen to you," the interpreters announced.

One of the wounded was airlifted in a U.S. army helicopter to a military hospital, said U.S. army Major Regina Largent, head of the Joint Information Bureau.

No members of the multinational force were wounded, she said.

Republicans to begin 100 days of reform

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Republicans, who in January take control of both the House of Representatives and the Senate for the first time in 40 years, are poised to transform the way the United States is governed.

Under the leadership of Newt Gingrich in the House and Robert Dole in the Senate, 231 Republican representatives and 53 senators will begin their task beginning Jan. 4 when the 104th Congress begins its new session.

Mr. Gingrich has promised that the first day will be "the longest opening day in history" and will begin the "100 days" to implement the so-called Contract With America signed by 300 Republicans.

The plan, drawn up before the Nov. 8 elections that routed Democrats and rocked the White House, contains the adoption of nine reforms, notably one that would require any tax increase to be approved by three-fifths of Congress.

The plan would also transfer from the federal government to the states social welfare programmes created during the 1960s which, according to Mr. Gingrich, have "created a culture of poverty and a culture of violence."

One of the first items of reform that is sure to be adopted is a constitutional amendment that would require the government to be

ratified by the 50 U.S. states, would not go into effect until 2002.

Republicans must still explain how they will do this with a plan that calls for increasing defence spending while cutting taxes.

But tax cuts are virtually assured given that President Bill Clinton has also proposed lowering taxes, though he and the Republicans differ over how much of a tax break to give Americans.

Under the Republican Contract With America, a \$500 tax credit per child would be given to those families earning \$200,000 or less while Mr. Clinton would give a tax credit to those families earning less than \$75,000.

Both sides agree on the need to reform the social welfare system that has ballooned astronomically since its inception, though they disagree over how to go about doing it.

Republicans propose cutting off aid to unwed mothers younger than 18 while states would be allowed to cut off welfare to anyone who has been on the rolls for at least two years. Anyone looking for assistance must also be willing to take jobs offered by the state.

Also under the Contract With America, legislators could serve no more than 12 years, or two six-year terms for senators and six two-year terms for representatives to replace what some Republicans called "career politicians

with citizens legislators."

For the Republicans to push their plan past Mr. Clinton, they will have to stick together as they are pushed and pulled by conservative "revolutionary" Gingrich and the more pragmatic Dole, a likely 1996 presidential candidate.

Presidential election primary campaigns get underway in about a year and possible compromises in 1995 between a Democratic White House and a Republican Congress will become increasingly difficult as the election approaches.

The incoming Republican Congress has pledged to boost the Pentagon's budget, reviving programmes from the Reagan years, but defence officials would rather turn down funds they say they don't need.

That message was made loud and clear by Congress' most powerful voice on the subject, future Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Strom Thurmond. The 92-year-old South Carolina lawmaker is asking political allies to oppose any cuts in the new year.

Though Republicans traditionally criticise Democrats for slashing defence funding too eagerly, the two parties for several years have agreed to scrutinise at the Pentagon the 1995 budget, at \$264 billion, was adopted with minimal wrangling last



A DIP IN ICY WATER: A "polar" swimmer in Peking passes a father and his daughter on their sled. Swimming in icy water is a winter tradition for some residents of the Chinese capital, who meet daily around the lake to enjoy an afternoon dip (AFP photo)

Centrist, leftist groups gain from Rao's troubles

NEW DELHI (Agencies) — The resignation of a senior Indian cabinet minister gives India's leftist and centrist opposition groups an important edge in their struggle with Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao, analysts said Tuesday.

As Mr. Rao grapples with corruption and growing dissent in his Congress Party, the resignation of Human Resources Development Minister Arjun Singh threatens the party's support from Muslims and lower-caste Hindus before crucial state polls.

Mr. Singh resigned Saturday, accusing Mr. Rao of betraying India's 120 million Muslims and not doing enough to bring the lower-caste Hindus into the national power structure.

Recent elections have shown the votes of both groups, traditional Congress supporters, are vital for any party.

"Congress will be dead without the minorities and backward castes," said Welfare Minister Sitaram Kesri, a close Rao ally and a shrewd party tactician.

He accused Mr. Singh of "deserting the battlefield in a time of crisis."

But Mr. Singh denied he was betraying the party or trying to split it. In his resignation letter, he accused Mr. Rao of watching silently as a Hindu mob razed a 400-year-old mosque in the northern town of Ayodhya in December 1992.

"This dark deed commit-

ted by vandals, inspired by religious fanatics, not only destroyed the structure but, in fact, seriously compromised the commitment of this republic to the ideals on which it was founded," Mr. Singh told Mr. Rao.

Ensnared Hindu-Muslim riots killed at least 2,000, mostly Muslims.

"It would be proper for the Congress Party to go on record publicly seeking an apology on this account," he said.

Mr. Singh also accused Mr. Rao of not doing enough to stop the exploitation of the lower castes and other socially-backward Hindu groups.

"We should initiate steps immediately to give them the levers of economic empowerment so that they also start acquiring a stake in the economic progress of the country," Mr. Singh said.

"There are many areas of trade and commerce at the local level in which the labour of these sections of the people at the moment is mainly exploited."

Analysts said Mr. Singh's position was beginning to resemble that of the centrist Janata Dal Party. Newspapers said he was also likely to gain support from the influential Communist-led Left Front.

"Left parties and left-of-the-centre parties may not be quite eager to join hands with Arjun Singh as the issues raised by him, like reforms with a human face and regaining the confidence of the minorities, are also

dear to them," the Times Of India said Tuesday.

It quoted unidentified ministers, who proclaimed their loyalty to Mr. Rao last week, as secretly approving of Mr. Singh's letter.

"I am with Mr. Rao, but how can I honestly say that the issues Mr. Arjun Singh has raised are not something that concern all of us?" the Times quoted one minister as saying.

Congress was trounced in recent state polls by the Janata Dal and its regional centrist allies.

Spurred on by the victory, the Janata Dal, which ruled India at the head of a minority government for 11 months from December 1989, was organising itself as a force in the politically important Congress-ruled Maharashtra state.

Any division of votes between Congress and Janata Dal could help bring a right-wing Hindu coalition to power in Maharashtra, analysts said.

The state is one of five due to hold assembly polls in February. Of these, Orissa and Bihar are ruled by the lower caste Hindu-based Janata Dal. Gujarat has a Congress government as does the fifth state of Arunachal Pradesh.

Analysts said Mr. Singh's revolt and the expected desertion of the Congress' remaining support among Muslims and lower-caste Hindus had made it difficult for Mr. Rao to stage off defeat.

Meanwhile the Congress party is anxiously watching the window of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi as it grapples with a leadership crisis.

Sonia Gandhi, 47, is widely believed to be pulling political strings from her heavily-guarded downtown home in the bitter inner-party struggle aimed at ousting Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao.

Mr. Singh is known to hold Sonia Gandhi in high regard. He met her at least twice before his dramatic resignation, and newspapers say he showed her his seven-page resignation letter, a virtual indictment of the Rao government, before sending it to the premier.

The Italian-born widow, who does not meet the press and has previously turned down requests to enter politics, has not commented on the reports. Her recent close-door meetings with Mr. Arjun Singh remain a mystery.

Political observers have been quick to condemn Mrs. Sonia Gandhi, who is counted among the most powerful figures in the country although she holds no government or political post, may be quietly backing Mr. Singh.

And the recent rumblings within the 109-year-old Congress against Mr. Rao have coincided with fresh demands that the charismatic Sonia Gandhi be drafted into the party to give it a new look that would click with voters.

Indian elite lead Singh's funeral

NEW DELHI (R) — India's elite led thousands of mourners Tuesday at the funeral of former President Zail Singh, cremated according to his Sikh religion on the banks of the holy Yamuna River.

The body of Mr. Singh, India's first Sikh president, was carried from his central Delhi home to the Vijayghat crematorium, close to memorials of India's founding fathers Jawaharlal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi.

Top officers of the army, navy and air force accompanied the body on its 11 kilometre journey, watched by thousands who lined the pavements to pay homage to a man who rose from a simple farming family.

Mr. Singh, who was 78, died in the northern city of Chandigarh Sunday after suffering multiple fractures when his car was hit by a truck on Nov. 29. A government inquiry found nothing suspicious in the accident.

Hundreds of Sikhs came from his home state of Punjab to the funeral, where Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian and Buddhist prayers were chanted.

"He (Zail Singh) was our pride. All of us loved him a lot. I would have even walked from Chandigarh to be at his funeral," said Autar Singh Grewal, a truck-owner who drove his vehicle through the cold night to attend.

Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao was joined by his ministers and opposition leaders in laying wreaths on the body during the ceremony, which was broadcast live on state television.

Government offices were closed and state media played solemn music to mark the third day of the seven-day mourning period, during which no official entertainments will take place.

Mr. Singh, appointed by then-Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, served as president from 1982 to 1987. He was called "Giani," a scholar, for his mastery of Sikh scriptures.

He faced a crisis in June 1984 after troops stormed the Golden Temple, the holiest Sikh shrine in the northern town of Amritsar, to flush out militants demanding a separate Sikh state in Punjab.

The president faced hostility from his own community, but feelings subsided after he played a crucial role in the withdrawal of the troops.

"His perseverance during that crisis period will always be remembered," said Ripu Daman Singh, a member of the Akali Dal, a Sikh political party.

Mr. Kumagai was a minister in Mr. Moribiro Hosokawa's coalition cabinet, which made bureaucratic-bashing a byword, but generally failed to wrest policy-making power away from officials.

But whoever reigns on the political front, bureaucrats are likely to face further tough times, analysts said.

"Every politician thinks he can win political points by bashing bureaucrats," said one analyst. "It's a more dangerous, more difficult environment that they face."

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U.N. claims progress in Bosnia negotiations

SARAJEVO (R) — U.N. officials said Tuesday they were making progress in talks although operations in the Bihać enclave were jeopardising the talks.

Bosnian Vice-President Ejup Ganic said his government would not discuss details of a proposed four-month cessation of hostilities until Serb forces from Croatia and Bosnia halted military activities in the northwest enclave of Bihać.

Mr. Ganic, who met Bosnia's U.N. Commander-General Sir Michael Rose, said his government was demanding the withdrawal of Croatian Serb forces from the enclave and an end to alleged Bosnian Serb attacks as "the condition for further negotiations."

But United Nations spokesman Alexander Ivankov told reporters negotiations were continuing apace on an extensive four-month cessation of hostilities, despite public statements from the Bosnian government.

"We consider that discussions (with the government) are ongoing although at an informal level currently," Mr. Ivankov said. "We still hope that the position of the Bosnian government will not derail the peace process."

Mr. Ivankov said talks held Monday with both sides had proved "positive and useful" and the U.N. was preparing a fresh draft of a proposed cessation of hostilities accord.

A seven-day ceasefire brokered by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter has slowed fighting significantly across Bosnia since it began Saturday.

U.N. officials want to take advantage of the truce to negotiate an accord for a four-month cessation of hostilities and a resumption of peace talks aimed at ending the 33-month-old war in the former Yugoslav Republic.

But the latest ceasefire pact was not signed by Croatian Serb and rebel Muslim forces attacking government troops in the Bihać enclave.

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Shooting and shelling in and around Sarajevo has subsided since the Christmas Eve truce went into effect but Serb forces laying siege to the city were restricting delivery of firewood, the UNHCR said.

Fuel convoys for the U.N. mission were still facing restrictions and delays by Bosnian Serbs, limiting the ability of peacekeeping troops to monitor the latest ceasefire, Mr. Ivankov said.

"If one of the sides comes to us and asks us to investigate a ceasefire violation somewhere we can say to them we don't have the fuel because that's the situation. We need to build up our fuel stocks," Mr. Ivankov said.

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Japan's top opposition party launches 'cabinet'

TOKYO (R) — Japan's biggest and newest opposition party launched Tuesday a "cabinet for tomorrow," aimed at reminding the public that it is ready to take over government from the fragile ruling coalition at any time.

The New Frontier Party (NFP), inaugurated two weeks ago, selected 14 "ministers for tomorrow" to debate their assigned topics with real cabinet counterparts in parliament in an approach based on Britain's shadow cabinet system.

But rather than associating itself with shadows, the NFP used Japanese characters meaning "bright day" for the cabinet to stress its intention of snatching the reins of government.

Also, it is wary of Japan's poor record of opposition politics, and did not want to be confused with a previous experiment, the Socialist Party's shadow cabinet of 1991.

Then, the Socialists looked to have an outside chance of winning an election and ousting the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), which had held power since 1955.

Despite LDP scandals that eventually led to its fall in 1993 and a flurry of optimism following the Socialists' emergence in 1989 as the biggest party in the upper house, the shadow cabinet was a flop and was widely ignored by the public.

"The Socialists used the term 'shadow cabinet' and it was criticised for being just a talking shop," explained Toshiaki Oikawa, a staff member at the NFP's head office.

"We want to show that we

can realistically take over the administration and govern," he said.

Analysts said another reason for the system is that the NFP was formed from nine parties, each with politicians used to being big fish in smaller ponds. The "cabinet" posts were carefully distributed between these former top dogs.

Financial matters will be handled by Takashi Yonezawa, former leader of the Democratic Socialist Party, and foreign affairs by Michihiko Kano, former leader of the New Party Minshu. Takekazu Nishikawa, formerly head of the Kaikaku No Kai, will be senior spokesman.

Of the NFP's two former prime ministers, leader Toshiki Kaifu was chosen as "prime minister for tomorrow" and Tsutomu Hata will handle the hot potato of political

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation
Established 1975
مؤسسة الصحافة الأردنية

Chairman of the Board of Directors:
MAHMOUD AL KAYED

Director General:
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University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

Telephone: 667171/6, 670141-4
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Facsimile: 696183

The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.
Subscription and advertising rates are available from the
Jordan Times advertising department.

Time for new mandate

WHEN DR. Abdul Salam Majali took over the premiership in May 1993, his mandate, as was contained in His Majesty the King's letter of designation, included holding the 1993 Parliamentary elections, the strengthening of state institutions, maintaining balance between the three branches of government, reforming the civil service, safeguarding democracy and continuing the quest for a comprehensive peace.

During the past 19 months, Dr. Majali's government has worked very hard to implement the King's directives. In the course of these months, some of the King's wishes were fulfilled. The elections were held on time and were conducted fairly, albeit with disgruntlement by Dr. Majali's antagonists. But while state institutions hardly witnessed a change, the balance between the three branches of government went through stress and strain, especially when Parliamentarians accused the Cabinet of extending its power at their expense.

Generally, our democratisation process stayed the course but not without serious complaints that freedoms were at times curbed. In all of this, the government was able to achieve one very important goal, which is peace with Israel.

Here again detractors of the government criticise, attack and say what they want about the agreement and the role the prime minister played in engineering it.

In all cases, the supporters and opponents of Dr. Majali commend him for his integrity, sincerity and honesty. Yet many of them agree that his government lacked a vision for the future of the country and that even if it had one, it failed to articulate it and, at times, only made confusing signals about it.

Now that His Majesty has signalled that change was due, the next government, whether headed by Dr. Majali or someone else, needs to translate the King's vision for the future of Jordan in the new era into concrete steps of action at all levels. Peace in the Middle East, while it lasts, presents Jordan with a golden opportunity to direct its resources, both human and material, into building a modern state that can be a model for the Arabs to emulate. The new government needs to bolster national unity with new mechanisms, needs to reform government administration with seriousness and needs to plant new roots for a wider and more participatory democracy. Even more, the new government needs to engage and mobilise the whole people in an effort to carry a genuine and credible modernisation drive.

In order to do all of this, the new government needs to be not only visionary and strong. It will have to count on wide support in the country as a whole.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER in Al Rai Tuesday discussed Russia's involvement in the Chechen republic, expressing the view that the Western nations are gloating over the events there. Jihad Momani said that Chechnya was a new trap for Moscow after Afghanistan in order to drain away Moscow's remaining power. The Western world wants to keep Moscow embroiled in internal strife and in problems related to Russia's neighbours and so remove Russia from major world scenes, and belittle its influence in various parts of the world. The writer said that Moscow has committed a major blunder by being bogged down in fighting against the Chechens because the conflict would cost Russia a great deal and would further weaken the former superpower. Furthermore, the Russian rockets falling on civilian targets and killing innocent civilians would damage the credibility of the Russian regime before the eyes of the Third World, and this is one more objective of the Western plot, said the writer. He said that Washington and its Western allies are overjoyed over the developments also because they want to see Islam contained and restricted by all means.

MOHAMMAD KAWASH, a writer in Al Dustour, advocated the cause of the old pensioners, saying that they receive meagre pension not enough for their sustenance. The veteran servicemen and civil servants have the right to demand that the government do them justice and increase their pension after spending the prime of their lives serving their nation. He said it is only just and fair to give attention to those who had served their nation so diligently and faithfully but are now facing the rising prices and cannot find the means to ensure additional income sufficient for their mere sustenance. The writer said that it would not take a miracle for the government to come up with a reasonable formula to do the old pensioners' justice.

Washington Watch

U.S. economic assistance and compliance with the terms of peace

By Dr. Jamun Zagby

WHILE THE Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) is expected to jump through hoops to qualify for limited U.S. assistance and support in the peace process, Israel receives unconditional aid in an amount that far exceeds the paltry Palestinian sum.

In addition to the annual congressional appropriation of \$3 billion (and hundreds of millions more in other defence-related contracts), this year Israeli received an outright add-on grant of \$80 million to support Russian Jewish resettlement projects. This last amount is larger than the total U.S. appropriation for fiscal year 1995 to the Palestinians.

While U.S. aid to the Palestinians is conditional on the PLO's compliance with "terms of the peace process" as defined by the U.S. Congress (which literally translates to commitments demanded by the pro-Israel lobby in Congress), U.S. aid to Israel is exempt from political conditions and is even exempt from any congressional or bureaucratic oversight. In other words, the "accountability and transparency" requirements that apply to the PLO and every other U.S. aid recipient do not apply to the government of Israel.

In order to certify that the PLO has met the conditions of U.S. aid, the State Department earlier this month issued a report on PLO performance (combating terrorism, recognising Israel's right to exist, ending the Arab boycott of Israel, etc.). The report was generally favourable and so next week, the U.S. president will almost certainly declare that the PLO is qualified to receive its 1995 aid allotment.

What is troubling, however, is not only the fact that the burden of compliance falls exclusively and unfairly on only the Palestinians, but that the U.S. assistance once granted is so bureaucratically encumbered that the Palestinian do not really receive the full benefits of this aid.

Unlike the \$3 billion in U.S. aid to Israel, the \$75 million to the Palestinian is not given directly to the Palestinian national authority. In fact, Israel is the only country of all the U.S. aid recipients to receive direct cash grant. All other recipients have their aid administered by the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID), and so it is for the Palestinian aid.

U.S. aid to Palestinians

Of the \$500 million pledged by the United States at the October, 12, 1993 donors conference, only \$375 million was intended as direct aid. The other \$125 million was, in fact, loan guarantees (not loans) to support U.S. private investors seeking joint ventures with Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. The loan guarantee programme is one of the better U.S. international support projects since it provides risk insurance and guarantees for U.S. investors who use commercial bank loans to put capital to work in the West Bank and Gaza. Already, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), the U.S. agency that oversees the loan guarantee programme, has announced that they are working with five U.S. investors who have partnerships with West Bank and Gaza businessmen. These first five joint ventures will take advantage of \$90 million in loan guarantees and political risk insurance. The \$90 million invested will generate over 4,000 jobs in the Palestinian territories.

Unfortunately, the story of direct U.S. aid is not so positive. While AID has issued its 1994 final report showing actual disbursements to West Bank and Gaza of \$75 million, almost half of that amount has not actually been disbursed. And of the amount that has been given, two-thirds has been in the form of direct assistance toward start up costs for the Palestinian Authority.

With the exception of the one aid funded housing project (which, after six months, remains a barely started foundation), the remaining millions of aid disbursements have been to the U.S. private voluntary organisation (PVOs) and some Washington-based consultant groups to provide studies, training and technical assistance either to aid itself or to Palestinians. The problem with these "technical assistance" programmes, of course, is that they do not create needed jobs or investment in Gaza and they have been designed by aid itself and awarded to U.S. contractors without any consultation with the Palestinian leadership.

For example, the \$11 million technical training programme to support the Palestinian private sector and small business development was awarded to a U.S.-based PVO that has had no experience in the Middle East (they had received a previous AID contract in Russia).

On the other hand, since the Sept. 13, 1993 signing of the Declaration of Principles, the government of Israel has confiscated or sealed off almost 25,000 acres of Palestinian-owned land in the West Bank and Gaza. In addition,

Yitzhak Rabin government has continued to build housing units in the occupied territories at a steady pace. In what Israel calls "Greater Jerusalem" — which extends as much as 13 kilometres into the West Bank — the government has planned for the construction of 15,000 new homes (in addition to the 13,000 units started by the Likud government and now being completed by the Labour government). In the rest of the West Bank, the Labourites have planned or completed another 4,000 new homes (in addition to the 11,500 units that were started by the Likud government which they have pledged to complete).

The Israeli government claims that the majority of the new construction is private and not government (in order to technically comply with the U.S.-Israel agreement regarding U.S. loan guarantees), but there is significant government involvement in all of this construction and, in any case, international law holds the occupying authority responsible for all such activities in areas under its control.

A number of human rights organisations have reported the continued practice by both the official occupation forces and armed groups of settlers to uproot, bulldoze or otherwise destroy Palestinian fruit trees. In just the month of October, for example, Al Haq (the Palestinian branch of the International Commission of Jurists), reported three serious instances in which settlers destroyed 558 dunams of Palestinian fruit trees.

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Equally troubling has been the impact of the closures on Palestinian trade and commerce. The closure in effect blockades Gaza and Jericho from Israel, Egypt, Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea. The results have been devastating. Unemployment has grown to 50 per cent. Exports have all but stopped and the Palestinian Gross National Product dropped by 25 per cent compared to last May. Reductions in employment result in reductions in tax collections, thereby denying the PNA needed revenues to operate basic services. This economic uncertainty in turn leads to a decline in private investment and the hope of creating remains unimpeached by the Israeli government. Among them are:

- 1) The safe passage between Gaza and Jericho is inoperative. ...The (Israelis) insisted on blocking Gazans who use the passage to Jericho from entering the West Bank. This is in violation of the Crossing Points article (on the page 20 of the agreement) which considers passage from Jericho to the West Bank akin to passage within the West Bank, requiring no permit or even an official crossing point. In effect, Israel wants to separate Gaza from the West Bank, requiring Gazans to obtain the same permit it requires them to have when crossing into Israel.
- 2) Palestinian political prisoners and detainees in Israeli jails and detention camps are still there despite the Cairo agreement requirements. More than six thousand of them are still denied their freedom.
- 3) The Economic Agreement is only partially implemented. Taxes and custom duties are collected by Israel. Rebates to the Palestinian authority are partial and delayed. It took six months to make Palestinian import permits acceptable at Israeli entry points. Palestinian exports to Israel face serious problems...
- 4) The Cairo Agreement's Second Annex requires Israel to submit to the PNA water consumption figures for the settlements in Gaza prior to the transfer of power to the PNA. Furthermore, it requires Israel to submit meter readings for every single well in the settlements on a periodic basis. This has not been implemented.

5) The same Annex requires Israel to deliver to the PNA a complete list of all the archaeological artifacts it had removed from Gaza and Jericho. It has failed so far to do so.

6) No progress has been made by Israel on continuing to deliver back to the PNA areas on the Beach of the Mawassi. No progress is made on the area of Jericho to be delivered to the PNA.

7) Four months have passed after the deadline of July 13 for the elections, redeployment in the West Bank, and deployment of the Palestinian Police. This is one of the most damaging aspects of the problems of the peace process.

8) Implementation of the Early Empowerment Agreement signed in August is not yet complete. Israel added a new requirement to the Agreement, which is availability of donor funding for the potential shortfall in tax collection in the West Bank. No such condition exists in the Agreement.

Any objective observer would note that Israel's failures to comply with terms of the peace process are greater in their severity than those alleged against the Palestinians. And yet, it remains only one of the ironies of the peace process that the burden of compliance falls exclusively on the Palestinians.

Jerusalem: an example

An example of the ironies that abound in this entire question of compliance can be seen in the U.S. and Israeli positions on Jerusalem.

Due to the terms of the Israeli-Palestinian Declaration of Principles (DOP), the sovereignty of Jerusalem is to be determined in final status negotiations between the two parties. U.S. policy towards the eastern portion of the city (occupied since 1967) has gone through a subtle but significant transformation.

U.S. policy has long considered the entire question of Jerusalem as unresolved (since this nation like every other does not place an embassy in that city), but the U.S. has consistently maintained that the eastern portion of the city, including the large swaths of land to its north, south and west, to be "occupied territory." Since the signing of the Israeli-Palestinian DOP and the recognition of Jerusalem as a "final status" issue, it is the Palestinians who have lost in both policy and practice.

Israel has continued its closure of the entirety of the expanded and self-declared "annexed" portions of Jerusalem. Palestinians from the West Bank are then regularly denied access to the medical, religious, social, cultural and educational institutions of the eastern part of the city. Jerusalem, which was a multi-faceted centre for West Bank Palestinian social life, has now become, to them, a no man's land.

The U.S. Congress and administration pay little attention to Israeli actions that are prejudicial to the final status of Jerusalem. The closure and the expanded Jewish construction in the Palestinian areas around the city continue unabated. And while ignoring these Israeli actions, Congress has moved to forbid U.S. agencies or agents from dealing with Palestinian officials in Jerusalem — so as "not to prejudice the final status negotiations." Even OPIC loan guarantees are not applicable to any U.S.-Palestinian joint venture to invest capital in the eastern part of the city.

Members of Congress regularly join in Israeli expressions of outrage over PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's comments on the Palestinian intention to see Jerusalem as the cultural capital of a Palestinian state. But they ignore the repeated claims by Israel that Jerusalem is the undivided capital of Israel. Prime Minister Rabin himself has on a number of occasions stated his belief that "Jerusalem" will remain united and under Israeli sovereignty.

And in this context, it is bizarre that no one understands how odd it was for 279 congressmen to sign a letter to President Clinton in October in which they claimed: "We remain unwavering in our belief that Jerusalem is Israel's capital — and only Israel's capital — and that it must remain a united city under Israeli sovereignty." The letter goes on to state "we support the action taken by the U.S. Congress to prohibit any new offices or meetings in Jerusalem to deal with the Palestinian Authority. Jerusalem is the capital of only one country, Israel, and we urge you to implement a policy that does not in any way support a Palestinian claim to the city."

And so the question must not be asked, who is in compliance and who is not, in any case, can the U.S. (as driven as it by pro-Israel sentiment) act as an effective and neutral arbiter on this matter.

Why the Jews of the Arab countries left for Israel

By Pascal B. Karmy

IN my article "Palestinian Refugees — who's to blame," published in the Jordan Times on Dec. 18, 1994, I sought to counter the allegation made by Shimon Peres in his book titled: "The New Middle East" that some thousands of Palestinians left Palestine in 1948 because the Arab leaders of the neighbouring countries called upon them to leave the war zones with the baseless hope that they will return after the Arab states win the war. I showed that in fact the Palestinian refugees were either forced or threatened to leave or physically expelled from their towns and villages.

The second allegation made in Mr. Peres' book is that the Jews of the Arab countries were "expelled" from there and had to emigrate to Israel. This latter allegation is blatantly untrue.

The Jews of the Arab countries were in fact urged by Zionist propaganda to emigrate to Israel. The Zionists published false news about Jews being persecuted in the Arab World. In addition, it is now an incontrovertible fact that in the 1950s Zionists perpetrated several bomb explosions in the Jewish centres of Baghdad, Cairo, Damascus and Moroccan cities to frighten the Jews to flock to Israel. Thus Zionist propaganda coupled with clandestine terrorism against the Jews of the Arab countries have succeeded to drive thousands of them out and to Israel.

Indeed the Jews of the Arab countries were not subject to anti-semitism or to persecution by their governments, nor fellow citizens. The Arabs and the Arab states have never in their long history persecuted their law-abiding Jewish citizens. The stigma of real persecution is historically and typically Western. The persecution of the Jews reached its apex at the hands of the Nazis in Europe. No such similar persecution at all had occurred in the Arab countries. There are at present thousands of Jews living in the Arab countries, who despite American Jewish and Zionist propaganda and false news about their maltreatment were not deluded by this propaganda and are living in peace and harmony with their fellow citizens.

No pogroms occurred against the Jews in the history of the Arabs as that of Tzarist Russia or Nazi Germany. When for example Andalusia in Spain was under the rule of the Umayyad Arabs, the Jews shared in the reigns of government and attained a high level of culture and philosophy. In the year 1492, however, when King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain captured Granada, the last Arab stronghold in Spain, thousands of Arabs as well as Jews fled to

North Africa as they could not live under the despotic and fanatic Spanish rule of the time.

In his classic book "The Gun And The Olive Branch," David Hirst says: "Zionism had much less appeal to oriental Jews than it did to European Jews. In their vast majority, the oriental Jews were actually Arab Jews, and the reason for their indifference was simply that, historically, they had not suffered anything like the persecution and discrimination of their brethren in European Christendom. Prejudice did exist but their lives were on the whole comfortable and their roots were deep. They were nowhere more at home than in Iraq."

"Thus anti-semitism was and still is used as double tool in the hands of political Zionists. It uses it abroad as a Damocles sword on the heads of those who criticise Israel while it manipulates it as a means to frighten the Jews to flock to Israel."

It is true that the revolt and the troubles caused by the Arabs in Palestine in 1930's and 1940's against British mandatory power for allowing unlimited Jewish immigration to Palestine had their effect on the Arabs everywhere and consequently the Arab Jews were treated with suspicion. In Iraq some Jews were killed. But this pogrom was the only one in Iraq history and took place at a time of political chaos when the revolt of Rashid Ali al Kailani was collapsing and most of his administration had taken flight as a British expeditionary force arrived in Baghdad. But there was no more such violence. By the end of 1948 there were 130,000 Jews in Iraq.

But the Zionists were still active in their midst and when the Zionists failed to convince the Jews of Iraq to emigrate to Israel they used bombs to frighten them to leave for Israel.

Furthermore, in order that Zionism may achieve the "ingathering" of Jews in Palestine, it encouraged anti-semitism and even persecution of the Jews in the countries

in which they were living. Zionism has from the start considered the Jews as foreigners in those countries. Even Herzl, the father of Zionism, himself was quite conscious of the convergence of anti-semitism with Zionism when he stated: "The anti-Semites are our most reliable friends and the anti-semitic countries are our allies." Herzl saw the usefulness of anti-semitism as an incentive to Jewish immigration to Palestine. Herzl's Diary which was published after his death in 1904 shows that in his contacts with and correspondence to prominent political leaders of his time, he was telling them that Jews were rebels and potential revolutionaries in the countries they were living in. In his contact with Tzarist Russia he asked Witte the Tzarist minister of finance to encourage the Jews to emigrate. Witte replied: "We encourage the Jews to emigrate by kicking them."

Thus anti-semitism was and still is used as a double tool in the hands of political Zionists. It uses it abroad as a Damocles sword on the heads of those who criticise Israel while it manipulates it as a means to frighten the Jews to flock to Israel.

The well-known anti-Zionist Jewish writer Alfred Lilienthal quoted in his book, "The Other Side of the Coin," what a Jewish columnist wrote in Davar newspaper in 1980 as follows: "I would send young men to the countries where Jews are absorbed in sinful self-satisfaction. The task of those young men would be to disguise themselves as non-Jews, and plague Jews with anti-semitic slogans such as 'bloody Jews', 'Jews go to Palestine' and similar intimacies. I can vouch that the results in terms of a considerable immigration to Israel from these countries would be ten thousands times larger than the results brought by thousands of emissaries who have been preaching for decades to deaf ears." Another Jewish writer, the American Rabbi Elmer Berger, testifies in his book "Who Knows Better Must Say So" how the Zionists manipulated anti-semitism and used terrorism to frighten the Jews especially those of the Arab countries who as to force them to immigrate to Israel.

All the above proves beyond doubt that the Arab countries did not 'expel' their Jewish citizens as alleged by Mr. Peres, but that it was Zionist terrorism and Zionist manipulation of anti-semitism that drove thousands of Arab Jewish citizens to flee to Israel. Although there are still thousands of Jews living in the Arab countries mainly in Egypt, Iraq, Morocco and Syria. In this connection it is not irrelevant to mention that one of the advisors of King Hassan of Morocco is a Jew.

Carbon monoxide kills 3

(Continued from page 1)

fire engulfed an educational centre in Misdar road, causing extensive damage but no injuries.

Capt. Share said investigations proved that the fire was caused by a kerosene heater.

"One of the employees we questioned said that while filling the heater it engulfed and the fire spread," he said.

It took firefighters one and a half hours to control and extinguish the fire at the Universal Cultural

Centre and prevent it from spreading, Capt. Share said.

Capt. Share could not give an estimate of the losses, but said that all the contents of the centre, including computers, typewriters, chairs and tables, were totally burnt.

It was the second fire involving shops in Amman in three days. On Dec. 24, an electric failure was believed to be the cause of a fire that destroyed a shoe store in Jabal Hussein. No casualties were reported in that blaze.

Yeltsin orders continued attack

(Continued from page 1)

He emphatically ruled out any question that the mainly-Muslim territory would be allowed to break away.

"The longer the situation in the Chechen Republic goes on, the greater the destructive effect on Russia's stability. It has become one of the main internal threats to our state's stability," Mr. Yeltsin said.

He also emphasised that "the way to a political settlement is still open."

In remarks directed at army soldiers, officers and interior Ministry personnel, Mr. Yeltsin said: "A clear objective has been placed before you: disarm hand-to-hand fighters, get them to lay down or destroy their heavy weapons."

He said that armed "gangs" in Chechnya would be "firmly stopped."

"I ask you to make every effort to reach that goal and believe that you will," he said in his first speech since Russian troops were sent to Chechnya on Dec. 11.

"You were sent to Chechnya to protect the interests of the Russian state, the interests of all the peoples of our country. You are under the protection of the state, of the constitution of Russia and under the personal protection of the president."

Chechnya is "part and parcel of the Russian Federation."

"No territory has the right to secede," he said, referring to Chechnya's unilateral declaration of independence three years ago.

Mr. Yeltsin said the unchecked development of crime in Chechnya was threatening the entire country. "Your own family may (one day) fall victim" to it, he added.

Grozny was being sealed off and armed groups stopped, Mr. Yeltsin said, adding that Chechen borders were under control and "trafficking in arms, drugs and false money was stopped."

"Law and order will be restored on the territory of the republic of Chechnya," said Mr. Yeltsin, adding that Grozny "must be free of criminal elements as soon as possible."

Mr. Yeltsin said he shared Chechens' fears of a withdrawal of Russian troops before the republics' "many armed men" have been disarmed.

Mr. Yeltsin's spokesman Vyacheslav Kostikov said

Mr. Yeltsin was primarily expressing support for the Russian military who were "carrying out their prime patriotic duty, which is not to allow the disintegration of Russia."

Mr. Kostikov said Mr. Yeltsin was aware of the fact that he found himself in "a very complicated situation."

Mr. Yeltsin was also "very concerned" before making his speech because of what Kostikov called "a certain misunderstanding of the situation in the mass media."

"Many people do not understand what is going on in the Chechnya, why we waited for so long, why Russian troops are acting this way," he said.

Mr. Yeltsin's speech will enable many Russians to understand the situation perfectly, Mr. Kostikov added.

Iran and Libya have called for a united Islamic stand to urge Russia to end its "massacre" in Chechnya, Tehran Radio said.

The call came in a telephone conversation between President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani and Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi late Monday.

The two leaders "deplored the killings in Chechnya, notably attacks on Grozny" and called for a peaceful resolution of the conflict as "the only reasonable way" to end the crisis.

They called for "a unified stand in the Islamic World to convince Russia to end the Chechen massacre," the radio said.

The Kremlin sent troops and tanks into Chechnya on Dec. 11 to disarm forces loyal to separatist leader Dzhokhar Dudayev, who declared independence in October 1991.

"I call on you to do everything you can to fulfil this task and I believe you will do so," Mr. Yeltsin said Tuesday, directly addressing the armed forces. Armed bands who resisted would be crushed.

"Remember that the explosion of hand-dirty on Chechen soil threatens our entire country. Your kin could be among its victims," he said.

"I want to assure all Russians — do not worry. Order and peace will be restored to Chechnya. We will take measures to avoid dragging on a solution of this complicated problems."

The Russian leader said Mr. Dudayev, a former Soviet air force general, was in power illegally and had launched an unprecedented crime wave against the rest of the country.

Algerian crisis deepens

(Continued from page 1)

ities were "deeply shocked and overwhelmed and condemned the odious crime with the utmost severity."

It reiterated an appeal to French nationals to leave Algeria and said the French embassy had told Algerian authorities of France's "most serious concern."

France has voiced irritation at the attitude of Algerian authorities during the hijacking. Algeria turned down a French offer of police help while the plane stood on a runway at Algiers airport and only agreed to let the plane fly to France after Prime Minister Balladur, fearing a bloodbath, personally intervened with President Liamine Zerroual.

Foreign Minister Alain Juppe said after the hijacking ended that the bloody conflict between Muslim rebels and the Algerian government was likely to bring more violence against French interests.

France, basking in the success of its bold twilight raid, weighed urgent new steps to protect its nationals in Algeria.

Prime Minister Balladur called senior aides to an early-morning meeting to work out stricter security measures for French nationals in the strife-torn north African country.

Paris later said it would maintain a suspension of all

air and sea passenger transport to Algeria by French firms, announced on Monday, while deciding how to step up security.

Mr. Balladur visited some of the wounded, who were in four Marseille hospitals. Twenty-five people were hurt, none seriously, in the raid — three flight crew, 13 passengers and nine of the crack gendarmier commandos.

One commando's fingers were blown off by a grenade, another and Borderie fractured his thigh-bone, elbow and wrist as he leapt from the cockpit window.

The passengers killed in Algiers were a Vietnamese diplomat, Commercial Counsellor Bui Giang To at Hanoi's Algiers embassy, French embassy cook Yannick Beugnot and an Algerian policeman.

Algeria has been in turmoil since the government called off a 1992 general election that the fundamentalist Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was poised to win. About 20,000 people have been killed in the ensuing three years of civil strife.

Millions in France held their breath as live television showed the hooded, black-clad commandos attack the cockpit, where the hijackers were holed up, with guns blazing.

After the bullets, the tourist explosion

By Paul Mansfield

FROM THE air it's as if nothing has changed. The plane comes in low over Beirut at night, crossing a bowl of sparkling lights ringed by mountains on one side and the dark expanse of the Mediterranean on the other. In the airport terminal there are sleepy officials and a few soldiers with automatic weapons. Only the bullet holes in the corrugated iron fencing hint at the damage done by 17 years of civil war.

Tourists are slowly returning to Lebanon. This tiny country of three million people imploded on itself in the early seventies, turning the former commercial capital of the Middle East into a war zone. Christians fought with Muslims, each side spawning myriad warring factions.

Other parties were drawn in — the Israelis, the PLO, the Syrians, the Americans, the French, the British, the U.N. — and most of them eventually withdrew licking their wounds.

By the late eighties Lebanon had become synonymous with car bombs, civilian massacres and hostages. Then, in 1992, with more than 100,000 people dead, a free election brought peace and the killing finally stopped. The infamous "militias" were disbanded and their members conscripted into the expanded Lebanese army.

Lebanon's new government has given itself 10 years in which to reconstruct the country. "Project 2002" is

already well under way and, astonishingly, it seems to be working.

Beirut, the former "Paris of the Middle East," bore the brunt of the war. What was once a palm-lined district of offices, shops and restaurants, is now a giant bomb-site. Ornate Ottoman facades are pockmarked with bullet holes. Buildings have been gutted by rocket and mortar fire. The wreckage goes on for block after block, a grotesque panorama of destruction. The bombed-out shell of the Holiday Inn still disfigures the Beirut skyline, a stark reminder of the bad old days.

But everywhere there are signs of recovery. New buildings are springing up, older ones being renovated or more frequently razed to the ground and replaced. In the chic commercial district of Hamra I had breakfast of coffee and croissants at an open-air cafe and watched the parade of well-heeled shoppers in the streets. Designer goods are back in the stores. On the seafront battered old VW vans dispense ice cream to strollers on the Corniche.

Up in the hills, in the fashionable suburbs of Broummana and Beit Meri, where rich Beirutis still maintain their weekend homes, first-class restaurants and hotels have reopened. And at the resort of Jounieh, 20 km to the north, the "strip" on Saturday night is a blaze of neon. Outside Beirut it seems the war never took place. I

drove south to Tyre, founded by the Phoenicians in the 3000 B.C. Down at the old harbour, wooden fishing boats are still built by hand. Chains of beefy young fishermen, stripped to the waist, unloaded baskets of fish on the waiting trucks amid the tang of salt and diesel.

The road to Tyre passes through some of Lebanon's prettiest scenery, rich farmland dotted with orange and lemon groves, and scented by wild flowers. At Sidon we stopped at the magnificent Crusader castle, and wandered round the vaulted souk, a medieval labyrinth of damp stone alleyways, where old men sat outside cafes smoking nargileh hubbly-bubble pipes (£1 a lung-searing go) and drinking Arabic coffee flavoured with cardamom.

The only evidence of war was the army checkpoints, a cluster of old tyres in the road, a wooden guardhouse, a few machine-gun-toting soldiers peering cautiously into the car. Many checkpoints are manned by the Syrian army, whose continuing presence the Lebanese deeply resent. "They are stupid people," said Ali, our driver. "But then they're still in our country, so I guess that makes us stupid too."

Like many Lebanese, Ali exuded a curious mixture of confidence and uncertainty. How had he survived the war? "We tried to live normally. We went out. We met our friends. If something had been going to happen, we

would usually hear about it a few days before." Even civil wars, it seems, have a grapevine.

Checkpoints aside, the major hazard of Lebanese roads is the traffic. Lebanese driving is creative, in the broadest sense. When one lane is blocked, create another. When that's blocked too, create a third even if it heads straight into the oncoming traffic. Drivers flog their beaten-up Mercedes and BMWs down the pitted roads at suicidal speed a style that no doubt evolved over 17 years of dodging bullets.

Tyre's spectacular Roman hippodrome and ancient town were largely deserted. Alexander the Great laid siege to the city in the 4th century B.C. as did the Babylonians, Romans, Crusaders and finally the Muslim Mamelukes. Lebanon is no stranger to invasion.

The pretty town of Byblos, north of Beirut, is one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world. Inland, the road winds up into the Lebanon mountains past the cedars of Lebanon, from those of Athens in size and splendour. The vast stone columns of the Parthenon and the Temple of Bacchus turned from cream to rose in the early evening light; pigeons wheeled overhead. We ate *lahm bi ajin* — a sort of meat pizza — hummus, and *tabbouleh* salad laced with mint and parsley, and drank a bottle of red Ksarra wine.

flyers hang around dusty squares, chatting. At Bcharre, birthplace of the poet Khalil Gibran, a goat was being skinned in the street, and a group of mini-skirted girls stood in the faded entrance of the Cinema Rivoli, now a kehah spit, with chickens on a spit roasting in the window.

At Hasroun we stopped for tea in a dilapidated cafe, where the owner, dressed as if for a night at the opera and speaking exquisitely, Levantine-accented French, bowed gravely, brought tea, fussed with the table, and passed round cigarettes. It was a near-comic display of formality but it had a purpose. Everything is back to normal now, the manager was demonstrating.

From the mountains the road dropped down into the Bekaa Valley, where huge dogs guarded flocks of sheep and Bedouin tents sat by the roadside in a biblical tableau.

On the valley floor, the ancient city of Baalbek rose like an apparition in the distance. Baalbek was named Heliopolis by the Greeks. Its magnificent ruins dwarf even those of Athens in size and splendour. The vast stone columns of the Parthenon and the Temple of Bacchus turned from cream to rose in the early evening light; pigeons wheeled overhead. We ate *lahm bi ajin* — a sort of meat pizza — hummus, and *tabbouleh* salad laced with mint and parsley, and drank a bottle of red Ksarra wine.

Baalbek, like the rest of Lebanon, is gearing up for a new tourist invasion: All the prices were listed in U.S. dollars.

In Tripoli, Lebanon's second-largest city, rows of money-changers sat outside their offices clutching wedges of banknotes. But even here, in the far north of the country, the war is never entirely absent. Down at the harbour wall the 15th-century Lion's Tower sits in the wreckage of a railway goods yard, alongside the derailed steam engines and bullet-riddled carriages of what was once the Tripoli-Beirut railway.

Back in Beirut we forged a path through the crazed traffic out to the airport, passing the remains of the American Marine barracks and the streets where John McCarthy and other hostages disappeared into the underworld of the civil war for years. Outside the departure lounge — repository of early-seventies chic — only a handful of planes was parked on the tarmac. Beirut once handled 100 flights a day — and if Project 2002 is successful no doubt it will again.

I chatted to a student who had lost both parents in the fighting. Her experience of life was almost entirely bound up with war. "I'm young," she said. "I'm 21. But here (pointing to her heart) I'm old." However, she didn't look it. She looked animated and optimistic.

Daily Telegraph

Daughter's diary tells of Rasputin's glory

By Marianne Macdonald

An extraordinary unpublished diary by the teenage daughter of Rasputin, the legendary peasant with healing powers who was employed by the Russian tsar, was to be sold at Sotheby's on Dec. 15.

The black exercise book, estimated to sell for up to £1,200, is a child's view of the momentous period of history shortly before the Russian imperial family was overthrown and murdered.

Maria Grigorievna Rasputina began the diary in 1914 at the age of 15 and confided in its ruled pages the story of her rags-to-riches transition from the rural village of Pokrovskoe in Siberia to the capital, St Petersburg, after her father became a favourite of the tsar.

Rasputin had begun life as a Siberian peasant working the land, but his healing powers endeared him to the tsar, Nicholas II, and his wife, Alexandra, after they discovered that he alone could heal the bleeding of their haemophilic son and heir, Alexis.

But because Alexis's illness was kept secret, Rasputin's role was misunderstood. Rumours sprang up that he was a German agent, a member of an orgiastic sect, the lover of the empress and her friend Anna Vyrubova, and the man who influenced political decisions. He became known as the "mad monk."

His presence at court was hated by the aristocrats, but he was a favourite of Alexandra and Anna, whom Rasputin had helped to walk again after a train crash in 1915. Such was the gossip about



Rasputin in the Siberian village of Pokrovskoe with his children. Maria, who began her diary at 15, is at his right

him that after the February Revolution in 1917, Anna was questioned repeatedly about their relationship before being found to be a virgin in a medical examination.

The propaganda against

Rasputin worked. But Maria's diary is written in the innocent language of a teenager unaware that in two years' time her father and the imperial family would be murdered.

"My biography: I was born in 1899 in the village of Pokrovskoe in the county of Tobolsk," she wrote.

"My parents are peasants, simple people. Our family consists of: father, mother, grandfather (my father's father), my brother, sister and myself."

"We all live happily together but sometimes I get cross with my brother and sister, but with my sister I get cross all the time. My father plays an important role because the Sovereign knows him and loves him."

Later entries describe how she played with the imperial children, Alexis and his four sisters, her feelings about the superior school she was sent to and her crush on her tutor.

Rasputin was murdered in 1916, an act which was "the first explosion which heralded the coming collapse," according to John Stuart, Sotheby's Russian expert.

In June 1918, Nicholas, Alexandra and their five children were murdered and Russia was plunged into anarchy.

Maria escaped to the West where she earned her living dancing in cabarets before moving to the United States, where she performed as a lion tamer in a circus.

She wrote a book defending her father and was last heard of living in California.

The Independent

How to storm a hijacked plane

MARSEILLE (AFP) — The elite GIGN troops who successfully stormed a hijacked Air France Airbus with 170 hostages on board here Monday had rehearsed the plan dozens of times previously.

However, the attack at Marseille airport counted as one of the greatest achievements in their history, involving more hostages than virtually any previous such operation.

As one GIGN member put it: "Inside an airplane is the worst type of assault operation, in which you can't move around. You can't see anything."

Their specific training for the operation started way before the GIGN officers even arrived in Marseille — on the plane which took them from Paris to Spain at the weekend, when the hostage crisis first erupted in Algiers.

The plane was an Airbus A-300 — virtually identical to the type involved in the Algiers hostage-taking, and therefore perfect material for

the 40 GIGN agents and 10 back-up officers to familiarise themselves with.

Then during the day, once the aircraft had arrived in the southern city, the GIGN officers donned the uniforms of airport staff to gain closer access to the plane on the tarmac.

In particular they posed as airline employees to deliver fresh supplies of pre-prepared airline meals to the aircraft — placing them at the top of a ramp from which, hours later, they would launch their assault.

Then came the attack itself — following a plan rehearsed so many times before that it was automatic to all of those involved. They were only waiting for the signal to go into action.

Then came the moment a gunshot fired from the cockpit of the hijacked jet smashed into a window of the control tower at Marignane airport, shortly after 5:00 p.m. (1600 GMT).

The assumption made at

that moment — apparently correctly — was that the leading kidnappers were located in the cockpit of the aircraft. The assault team was given the go-ahead.

Following a well-rehearsed plan, a small group of officers created a high-profile diversion at the front of the aircraft, storming the cockpit.

Throwing tear-gas grenades and pumping off automatic gunfire, the group succeeded in diverting the hijackers' attention while the second, larger force, gained access at the rear of the aircraft.

This second group was charged with ordering all the passengers to get down on the ground, and then operating the aircraft's emergency chutes which allow them to slide to safety in case of emergency.

This was the particularly risky part of the operation from a casualty point of view. The training manual for the Groupe d'Intervention de la Gendarmerie Nationale

tells them that there is "danger to hostages" if there are more than 70 passengers on board. The Air France Airbus had 170 people on board.

The rest is history. The assault itself took a little over seven minutes, with a fire-fight continuing at the front of the plane as the passengers disembarked.

For a time during the assault, which was carried live on French television, the watching French public — and no doubt France's political leaders — may have been rather concerned at the amount of gunfire and smoke.

But that was all part of the plan. The final casualty figures for the operation told the tale: Four hijackers dead, 13 passengers with cuts and bruises, and four injured.

In fact, although the operation went almost perfectly to plan, the GIGN agents came off by far the worst: nine were injured, including one who had his hand blown off by a grenade.

Attack recalls past operations

PARIS (AFP) — The successful storming Monday by elite French para-military police of an Airbus hijacked by Islamic militants, recalled past attacks on hijacked planes, often with much higher casualties.

June 27, 1976: An Airbus Tel-Aviv-Paris belonging to Air France was hijacked by a pro-Palestinian commando after taking off from Athens and diverted to Entebbe in Uganda. The hijackers demanded the release of 52 Palestinians detained in Israel and other countries.

On July 3, Israeli soldiers flew in aboard three Hercules aircraft and seized control of Entebbe airport in a lightning raid in which they released all the hostages. Seven hijackers, three hostages and about 20 Ugandan soldiers were killed in the 90 minute operation.

On Oct. 13, 1977, a Lufthansa Boeing-737 on a flight from Majorca to Frankfurt with 87 people aboard was hijacked by four Palestinians demanding the release of 11

German leftwingers held in West Germany. The German pilot was shot dead. The aircraft finally landed in the Somali capital Mogadishu where a West German police commando stormed it and freed the hostages. Three hijackers were and a fourth, a woman was wounded.

February 1978: In Larnaca Cyprus, Egyptian anti-terrorist forces stormed a Cyprus Airways DC-8 in which two Palestinians were holding hostage 11 passengers and the four-man crew. The previous day the hijackers had seized 50 people taking part in a congress in Nicosia.

Eleven of the hostages were still prisoners when the Egyptians stormed the plane without receiving the go-ahead from the Cypriots.

Cypriot guards fired on the Egyptians and in the confusion 15 people were killed and 15 were wounded, all Egyptians. The hostages were finally released and the two hijackers arrested.

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U.S. looks to Asia and Latin America in new economic order

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The United States struggled to stay ahead of the pack in 1994 and into the new century by promoting multilateral and regional ties as a buffer to the growing economic might of Europe and Asia.

The keystone of U.S. policy aimed at liberalising world trade was when the representatives of 124 countries gathered in Geneva at the start of the year to end years of difficult talks by signing the Uruguay Round in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

That landmark agreement opened up hitherto protected sectors such as services and agriculture, slashed tariffs by 38 per cent and will engender \$200 billion in additional trade worldwide over the next ten years.

On the regional level, the United States was active on two fronts — Asia and the Americas.

The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) grouping the United States, Canada and Mexico was born in January and in December

at the Summit of Americas in Miami, 34 countries pledged to establish a free trade zone by 2005 stretching from Alaska to Argentina.

The U.S. administration was also a motivating force in the summit of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum in Jakarta when 18 countries including powerhouses Japan and China agreed to set up a free trade zone in the region by 2020.

With 800 million inhabitants, the Americas account for 29 per cent (\$6.8 trillion) of global industrial production and 17 per cent (\$1.2 trillion) of world trade.

The APEC countries with 2.08 billion inhabitants account for 52 per cent (\$12.2 trillion) of world industrial production and 41 per cent (\$3.1 trillion) of world trade.

This new-found U.S. faith over the last few years in the merits of regionalism reflects the U.S. economy's difficulties in maintaining its leading edge in the world economic system, said Jagdish Bhagwati, an economics professor at

Columbia University.

In the three decades that followed the end of World War II, the United States reigned supreme over the world economy, accounting for 50 per cent of industrial production and with healthy trade surpluses.

The current situation is a pale shadow, with U.S. industrial production cut back to 25 per cent of the whole and with chronically bad trade deficits, notably with Japan and China.

At the same time, the economic and social integration of western Europe has spawned a giant rival which currently accounts for 40 per cent of world trade and 28 per cent of industrial production.

The specter of "Fortress Europe" has convinced the United States that it needs to foster its own free trade zones with its own geographic peers.

The end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union also removed a key binding factor in trans-Atlantic ties of the last 50 years.

The same historic developments left an imprint in the Pacific where countries like Japan, reliant on U.S. milit-

ary muscle, are now less inclined to bend to pressures from Washington to open their domestic market.

The Clinton administration has made it clear that its priority in Asia is to finally slash its stubborn bilateral trade deficit with Japan, which topped \$60 billion in 1993.

These are the barriers forcing the United States to look elsewhere in Asia and in the Americas to redress the situation.

"We are not abandoning our efforts with Japan because we can't allow the world's second-largest economy to have sanctuary markets," said U.S. Trade Representative Mickey Kantor.

But when we look at the numbers we saw where the action is and it's in our own hemisphere and in Asia outside of Japan," he said.

U.S. exports to Japan are forecast to increase by 70 per cent to \$88 billion by 2010, but for the rest of Asia the increase will be much bigger at 163 per cent to \$248 billion.

For Latin America, the growth of U.S. exports will be similarly explosive and are forecast to reach \$232 billion in the same period.

Israel to lift all customs duties on imports from U.S. at beginning of 1995

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Israel will remove all customs duties on imports from the United States on Jan. 1, when the final stage of the Israeli-U.S. free trade area agreement takes effect, the treasury announced Tuesday.

The agreement, signed in 1985, established three lists of goods. Israel immediately removed customs on the less sensitive imports, which made up the first list.

It had to remove customs on the final list, containing the most sensitive items, 10 years later.

This list includes refrigerators, which carry a 14 per cent customs tax; air conditioning units, taxed at 10.5 per cent; footwear 16-22 per cent; telephones 18 per cent; cellular and cordless phones 12.7 per cent; textiles up to three per cent, and fresh fruits and vegetables 14 per cent.

Israel has a free trade area agreement with the European Community but it does not include fruits and vegetables.

Israel is negotiating a free trade agreement with Canada.

Brazilian corruption estimated at \$20b

RIO DE JANEIRO (R) — Corruption within the Brazilian government costs the country about \$20 billion and accounts for 40 per cent of the national investment budget, Brazilian media quoted an official report as saying.

"The Brazilian government has got to end corruption," President Itamar Franco told reporters in Brasilia after handing the report to his successor Fernando Henrique Cardoso who takes office Jan. 1.

Government investigators found officials, contractors and suppliers are skimming off roughly \$20 billion, mostly by deliberately overpricing existing public contracts and pocketing the difference, according to the report cited in the media.

"When corruption starts to gnaw at the foundations of government, then democracy itself ceases to exist," Mr. Franco said during the ceremony handing over the report, which was drawn up over 10 months.

Brazilian television, radio and news agency reports did not specify the time period over which the losses to corruption had occurred.

"The arm of the law must reach not only the poor but also the powerful," said Attorney General Aristides Junqueira whose office has been asked to investigate the report's findings.

Brazil has been rocked by successive corruption scandals since the December 1992 toppling of former president Fernando Collor amid allegations of influence peddling.

Earlier this month, however, the country's highest court threw out charges of corruption levelled against Mr. Collor.

Brazil has one of the world's worst income distribution ratios. Government figures show 21 per cent of the country's 150 million population earn just enough to survive.

Germany mourns father of 'economic miracle'

BONN (R) — Germany Tuesday mourned the death of Karl Schiller, the former Social Democrat who ranked as one of the fathers of the country's "economic miracle."

Dubbed "super minister" because he held both the economics and finance portfolios at the same time in the early 1970s, Schiller died late Monday aged 83 after a long illness.

Germany had lost one of its most important economists who had helped shape the German economic powerhouse, Finance Minister Theo Waigel said in a statement.

"He won great respect for his unerring judgement and his forthright advocacy of free market politics," Mr. Waigel said.

Chancellor Helmut Kohl said Germany had lost one of its greatest political economists.

"He achieved something remarkable for Germany at a decisive stage in its history,"

he wrote to Schiller's wife, Vera.

Schiller will be remembered most for his "concerted action" programme that brought industry, unions and government together to boost growth and curb inflation, a consensus-seeking concept that still shapes the German economic model.

The scheme, launched during West Germany's first post-war recession in the late 1960s, helped transform a country pummed to rubble in World War II into the economic engine of Europe.

Social Democrat (SPD) leader Rudolf Scharping praised Schiller not only for his contribution to the party but also for the constructive criticism he never shied from making.

Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel said Schiller had been instrumental in pulling Germany out of the 1960s recession.

Born on April 24, 1911 in Breslau, Schiller studied economics and sociology. After serving in the army, he re-

turned to academia before entering politics with the SPD.

He shot through the ranks, making a name for himself as an economics expert and outspoken critic of the government of Ludwig Erhard, the Christian Democratic (CDU) creator of Germany's social market economy.

Named economics minister in 1966 under the grand coalition of CDU and SPD, Schiller developed his concerted action plan around what he called "the round table of collective reason."

He became "super minister" during the 1971 currency crisis when he was handed the finance portfolio. As such, he championed fiscal discipline but met fierce resistance from his cabinet colleagues under former SPD chancellor Helmut Schmidt.

He resigned in July 1972. After retiring from active politics, Schiller advised clients like Ford Motor Co. and the Saudi Arabian government.

Egypt keeps subsidies to avoid 'upheaval'

CAIRO (AFP) — Prime Minister Atef Sedki announced Tuesday that state subsidies on the necessities would be maintained to avoid any social unrest.

Dr. Sedki told Tuesday's edition of the evening Al Massa newspaper that the government would "continue to fix the price of bread and allocate subsidies to all the necessary social services to avoid social upheaval."

The government will allocate around \$1.3 billion in the 1995/96 budget to subsidise staple foods, Planning Minister Kamal Al Ganzai said.

"The poorest classes will have nothing extra to pay next year, that's one of the main objectives of the 1995-96 budget," he said.

The budget for social and

health service would be increased by \$900 million in \$7.5 billion.

The government subsidises mainly cooking oil, flour, wheat and medicine.

The press here has noted price rises over the past two weeks which Dr. Sedki blamed on fluctuations on the world markets.

He also said that the government would not sell off any state firms lower than their estimated value. "We are not obliged to sell at a loss," he said.

The International Monetary Fund has criticised the slow pace of Egyptian economic reforms, particularly in its privatisation programme.

The IMF wants Egypt to halt subsidies and devalue the pound.

health service would be increased by \$900 million in \$7.5 billion.

Western donors hail Kenya reform but still wary

NAIROBI (R) — Western donors have hailed Kenya's latest economic reform but questioned the long-term commitment of a government noted for policy U-turns.

The lifting of a ban on foreign investment at the Nairobi Stock Exchange announced by President Daniel Arap Moi was the latest in a series of measures grudgingly undertaken by Kenya since last year.

The move was a key demand by donors who underwrote annual aid up to \$850 million.

President Moi said he would also allow private foreign exchange bureaux to

operate from January 1995.

The latest measures which ended all foreign exchange controls in Kenya follow a series of other economic reforms implemented by the government since 1993.

These include flotation of the shilling currency, removal of trade barriers, decontrol of the petroleum industry, deregulating agricultural marketing, closing questionable banks and strengthening management of the central bank.

"Both (reforms at the stock exchange and private bureaux) are positive steps. It is a logical progression," a Western ambassador told

Reuters.

"But donors and investors would like to see consistency and a sound track record which this country badly needs but desperately lacks presently," the diplomat added.

Another ambassador of a donor country echoed these views saying, "this country has earned itself a lot of mistrust. So our reaction is let's wait and see whether these are long-term measures here to stay or mere showpieces to appease us."

The diplomats were referring to previous policy U-turns.

In February last year the government floated the shilling currency and abolished exchange controls only to change its mind six months later. Donor pressure forced them back to reforms.

In September Kenya lifted a ban on imports of maize and wheat which had been imposed less than a month earlier to protect local industries.

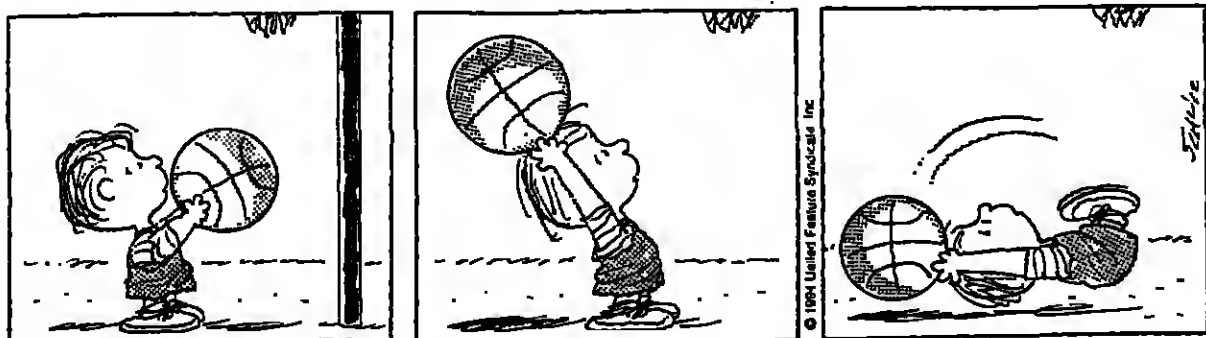
The donor concerns were supported by two leading critics of the government who are also members of the opposition Ford-Kenya Party, lawyer Paul Muite and economist Robert Shaw. Mr. Shaw told Reuters:

"This government has gone back several times on major policy measures and that is a problem because none knows when to trust it."

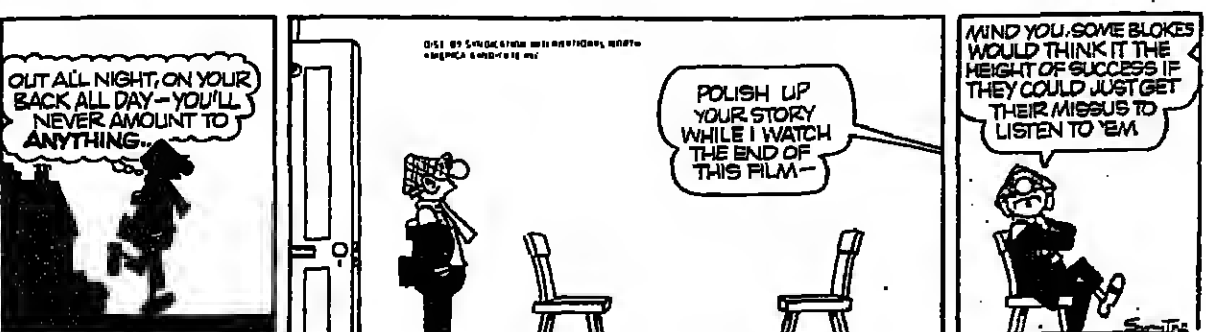
Mr. Muite said in a letter to donors: "We acknowledge there has been some notable progress in the reforms effected by the government but much needs to be done particularly on the details."

Mr. Muite said the government's policy framework paper on the economy had serious shortcomings. "The government has for instance liberalised the financial sector but it has not repealed the exchange control act."

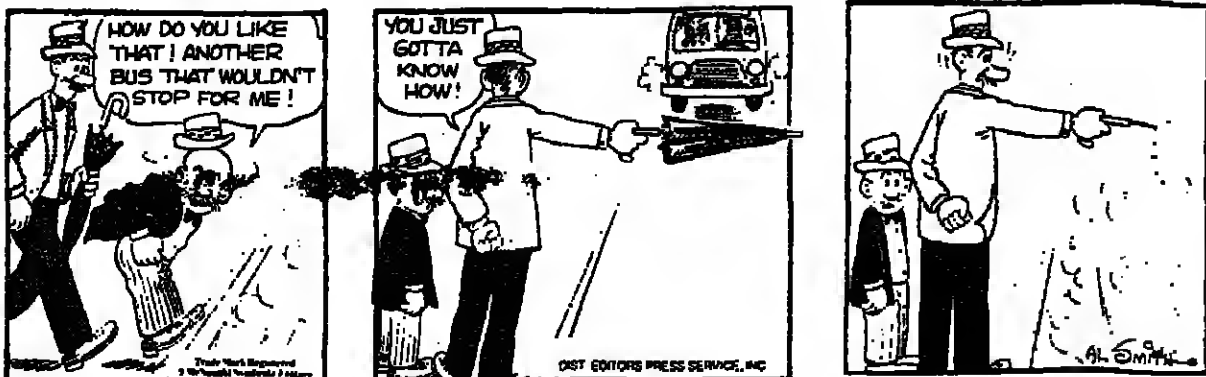
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff

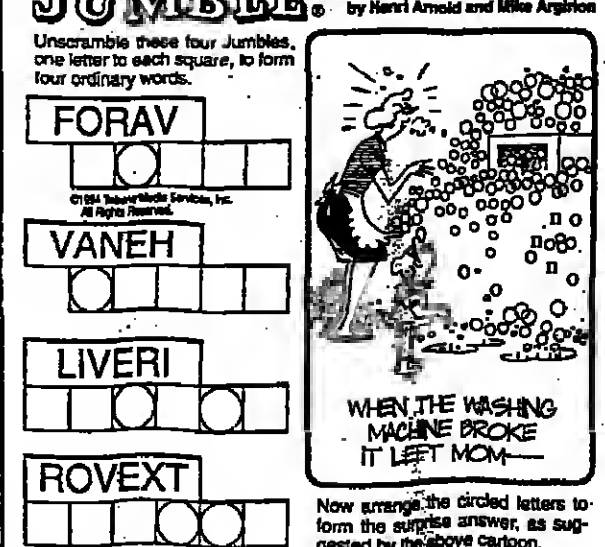


THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



"They say certain foods make you feel younger. Tonight we're having curds and whey with green eggs and ham!"

JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

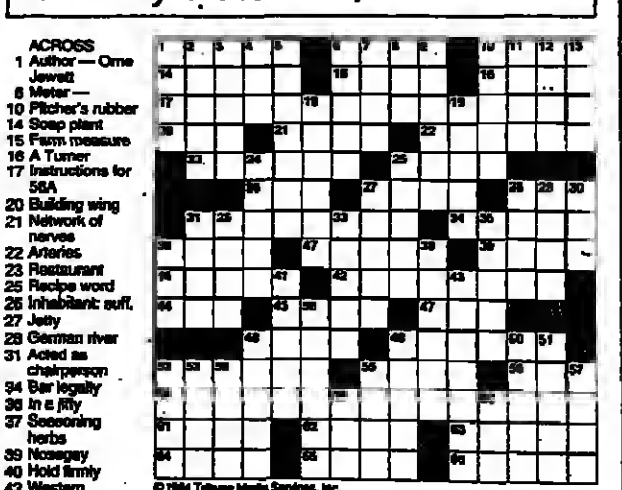


Print answer here: IN A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Yesterday's Jumble: ORAMA FUNNY STUPID BUZZER

Answer: When it came to committing the confirmed bachelor was this — UNBLED

THE Daily Crossword by Don Johnson



ACROSS

1 Author — One Jewett

8 Meyer

10 Fisher's rubber

14 Soap plant

15 Farm measure

16 A Turner

17 Instructions for SEA

20 Building wing

21 Network of nerves

22 Anxious

23 Restaurant

25 Recipe word

26 Inhabitant suit

27 July

28 German river

31 Acted as chairperson

34 Bar legally

36 In a jiffy

37 Seasoning herbs

39 Noisegay

40 Hold firmly

42 Western headgear

44 Actor Deacon

45 Inquire

47 Old make of car

48 Tense

49 Vandyke

52 Binky

55 Signaling sound

58 Painting

59 Singer Paul

61 Foundation

62 French river

63 French river

64 Youngsters

65 Edge

66 Short jacket

67 Tiny plant

68 Becomes aware of

DOWN

1 Urp's call

2 "Comet" three to 50 — (Bible)

3 MC city

4 — (exhausted)

5 An Abbot

7 Shifter

8 Wrath

9 Formal argument

10 Bart or Flingo

11 Puzzle

12 Singer Paul

13 Foundation

14 French river

15 French river

16 Youngsters

17 Edge

18 Short jacket

19 Tiny plant

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business daily beat

A review of economic news from the Arabic press

Steep prices prompt people to tighten belts

★★ In his statement to the Lower House of Parliament, Supply Minister Adel Qudus admitted the fact that the cost of living went up by 5.4 per cent and that prices of foodstuffs have shot up by 13.7 per cent. Foodstuffs, including grain and by-products, poultry, meat, fish, dairy products, eggs, oil and ghee, fruits, vegetables, dry and canned vegetables, nuts, sugar and its by-products, tea, coffee and other products, have become so expensive that purchasing them increasingly lowers the living standards of households. A supermarket owner said he knew many consumers who are cutting on their purchases. Another retailer noted that people were tightening their belts and that himself, for one, could not afford to have a diversity of food despite his dealing in foodstuffs. "If I am to enjoy three good meals a day, that will cost at least JD 10 if not more for a family," he explained, adding that there was no possibility because there were other expenses like rent, clothing, etc.

Other merchants point out that demand is high for lentils and other legumes which are still the cheapest. A confectionary manufacturer says his sales are down by more than 50 per cent, noting that his product is of least concern to the public amid the soaring prices for basic food. A housewife says her husband is a government employee and that his salary is barely enough for 10 days after paying JD 70 for rent.

A buyer at the Al Widad vegetable market says 95 per cent of the people cannot afford to buy their needs of vegetables because prices are extremely high. "Without having to pay rent, we are forced to cut our purchases by half...I don't know how the people who have to pay rent could manage to live," he said.

A vegetable trader said that much produce rots because nobody buys at high prices. "Can you imagine that people are now asking for lemons we used to throw away," (Al Ra'i)

★★ The Civil Consumer Corporation (CCC) will close its stores throughout the country for five days starting Wednesday, Dec. 28, 1994 for end-of-year stock taking. The store's markets will reopen on Jan. 2, 1995 (Al Dustour).

★★ Since Thursday is a religious holiday, the Ministry of Finance will open all its offices around the Kingdom on Friday, Dec. 30, 1994 to receive property tax from the public. Failing to pay the tax (Al Musaqafat) by Saturday, the last day of this year, a fine that goes up to 50 per cent of the tax amount will be imposed (Al Dustour).

★★ A court which is looking into a case of whether restaurants and patisseries should be categorised as industrial sector or service sector has sent an inquiry to the Ministry of Industry and Trade asking for its view. The court also sent an inquiry to the Amman Chamber of Industry to make sure whether restaurants and patisseries are included in its records. The Department of Customs has been after these businesses since the beginning of June to have them pay sales tax and more than 10 warnings, some carrying as high as JD 16,000 in penalty, were issued until the end of September. There are around 200 patisseries in Amman alone and the same number in both Zarqa and Irbid.

★★ According to Amman Financial Market (AFM) Director-General Umayyah Tougan, one of the main reasons for the stock market retreat is the rigidity with which the liquidity policy had been applied in the market (Al Aswaq).

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET

ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUESDAY 27/12/1994			
COMPANY'S NAME	NO. OF SHARES TRADED	VALUE TRADED JD	PREV. CLOSING PRICE
ARAB BANK	180	33804	182.500 182.350
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	19875	85976	4.360 4.350
BANK OF JORDAN	300	760	2.520 2.510
THE HOUSING BANK	1200	6740	5.600 5.650
JORDAN TRUST BANK	3550	7475	2.100 2.090
ARAB JORDAN INVESTMENT BANK	800	3382	4.225 4.250
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	3350	11967	3.560 3.700
BUSINESS BANK	300	1050	3.480 3.500
BEIT ALAL SAVINGS/INVESTMENT FOR HOUSING	1500	1545	1.020 1.050
AMMAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	119071	181458	1.510 1.510
PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK	4650	7831	1.680 1.700
BANKS SECTOR	152326	340610	INDEX NUMBER: 157.94
			CHANGE: +0.032
JERUSALEM INSURANCE	300	840	2.800 2.800
AL-WISIR AL-ARABI INSURANCE	350	1680	4.750 4.800
INSURANCE SECTOR	650	2520	INDEX NUMBER: 138.43
			CHANGE: +0.082
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER	12580	19178	1.530 1.530
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER / WSN	1500	7240	4.820 4.850
JORDAN RIDGES MINERAL	1700	3706	2.180 2.180
ARAB INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	450	2125	4.700 4.900
JORDAN NATIONAL SHIPPING LINES	3000	1245	4.140 4.150
NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	1800	4309	2.390 2.390
JORDAN GULF REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT	24300	39015	1.190 1.210
JORDAN FRANCHISE FOUNDATION / ALRAI	2785	34989	12.550 13.570
UNITED MIDDLE EAST & CONSUMER GOODS	16450	39488	2.390 2.410
ARAB LIT. FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	750	3625	4.820 4.850
JORDANIAN EXPATRIATES INVESTMENT HOLDING	500	705	1.380 1.430
SERVICES SECTOR	66715	150733	INDEX NUMBER: 132.15
			CHANGE: +0.682
ATTARKEP CONST. MATERIAL MANUFACTURING	3500	3120	1.280 1.340
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	3483	9991	2.870 2.870
JORDAN PESTICIDE INDUSTRIES	15721	45459	2.900 2.940
THE JORDAN WOODSTOCK MILLS	10100	79360	7.850 7.850
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	12950	64870	5.010 5.120
JORDAN CERAMIC INDUSTRIES	750	4650	6.100 6.300
ARAB CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES INDUSTRIES	300	4800	15.600 16.000
DAIRY INDUSTRIES	1517	6817	4.500 4.750
DAR AL DAMA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	20450	33673	16.200 16.240
ARAB INVESTMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE	4100	3997	.970 .970
ARAB ALUMINUM INDUSTRIES	750	5136	6.850 6.650
DAIRY INDUSTRIES	27750	25708	9.250 9.300
ARAB PAPER CONVERTING & TRADING	3400	13034	3.850 3.900
NATIONAL STEEL INDUSTRIES	5000	30750	6.150 6.150
INTERMEDIATE PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	9400	36730	3.870 2.830
JORDAN POLYMER INDUSTRIES	450	6817	1.500 1.500
ALADIN INDUSTRIES	700	3891	5.550 5.550
JORDAN INDUSTRIES & MATCH/JIMCO	3050	2556	.830 .840
REGIONAL CABLE & WIRE MANUFACTURING	12500	66250	5.250 5.300
JORDAN SILICO-CHEMICALS	650	480	0.730 0.730
ARAB CENTER FOR PHARM. & CHEMICALS	500	1390	2.760 3.780
KAWTHER INVESTMENT	600	1050	1.760 1.750
UNIVERSAL HOUSING INDUSTRIES	3400	9968	4.150 4.190
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR	148411	741073	INDEX NUMBER: 127.50
			CHANGE: +0.302
GRAND TOTAL	368002	1234925	INDEX NUMBER: 143.49
			CHANGE: +0.172
NO. OF TRADED SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET	1	153380	
VALUE TRADED IN PARALLEL MARKET	1	180161	

Kuwait prosecution to investigate debtors

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwaiti prosecutors plan to investigate debtors who failed to meet a deadline to arrange repayment of about \$671 million they owed to local banks, an official said Tuesday.

The move is part of Kuwait's plans to settle 6.3 billion dinars (\$21 billion) in bad loans plaguing banks for a decade.

The debt owed by 9,546 corporate and individual borrowers stems from the 1982 crash of Kuwait's Souq Al Manakh bourse and from commercial losses aggravated by Iraq's 1990-91 occupation.

Most debtors who met the Oct. 31 deadline opted for early "cash" settlement, which forgives up to 75 per cent of the debt, rather than a 12-year rescheduling option with stricter terms.

Failure to arrange repayment means the entire debt immediately falls due and the state may petition the courts to declare a debtor bankrupt.

Local banks sent names of the debtors to Kuwait's attorney-general to take legal action to recover the debt of about 200 million dinars (\$671 million).

"Of those, some might face bankruptcy, others might face criminal charges and some might settle their debts," the official said. Those proven to have evaded repayment could face five years in jail, he added.

"There are among the debtors people who owe 40 to 50 dinars (\$137 to \$167), those do not know that their debts were included under the bad debts umbrella," the official said. "Such people would repay their debts before the investigation starts."

The factors that tipped Lloyd's into the red.

However, many traditional Lloyd's backers, known as names, have seen their assets wiped out by their unlimited liability to the market and have decided to quit, even though Lloyd's says better times are around the corner.

The number of names still actively investing in the market for 1995 is 14,804, down more than expected from this year's 17,529 and less than half the peak of more than 32,000 in 1989.

Names will contribute, \$7.8 billion (\$12.2 billion) or 77 per cent of total capacity in 1995 and new-style corporate members £2.4 billion (\$3.7 billion) or 23 per cent.

In 1994 individuals provided £9.3 billion (\$14.5 billion) and companies, which have limited liability and were allowed into the market for the first time this year, £1.6 billion (\$2.5 billion).

"Present market conditions indicate that there are good opportunities for underwriting profitable business in 1995," said Lloyd's Chairman David Rowland.

Lloyd's, which reports its results three years in arrears to allow time for claims to be processed, is expected to show its fifth successive loss next year, when it announces figures for 1992, but is expected to return to profit on its 1993 year.

Record losses of £8 billion (\$12.5 billion) since 1988 are the subject of a series of court actions, with around 20,000 names belonging to a clutch of action groups seeking compensation for at least some of their losses.

The losses are due to a series of catastrophes in the late 1980s combined with pollution and other liability claims flowing in from old policies.

However, many names allege that negligence on the part of their Lloyd's agents meant that they suffered proportionately worse losses than the industry as a whole.

LONDON (R) — Traditional backers of Lloyd's of London are quitting in large numbers but figures released suggest that the 300-year-old insurance market is plugging the gap with new institutional investors.

Lloyd's, the world's largest insurance market, said it would have enough capital to underwrite £10.2 billion (\$15.9 billion) in premium income next year, down from £10.9 billion (\$17 billion) this year.

The fall in its capacity will help keep the supply of insurance in line with demand and stop premium rates falling as they did in the late 1980s, when oversupply was one of

China issues freeze on investment in luxury projects

BEIJING (AFP) — China has issued a ban on all new luxury construction projects until the end of 1995, in a bid to control excessive fixed asset investment that is fuelling high inflation.

The freeze, which Xinhua said covered luxury hotels, office buildings and villas, as well as golf courses and race tracks, is part of government efforts to curb inflation and target limited state funds at crucial infrastructure and agriculture projects.

Inflation has this year soared to its highest level since China launched its economic reforms in 1989, hitting 27.7 per cent year-on-year in October before stabilizing to 27.5 per cent the following month.

"Launching new luxury projects is obviously inappropriate," Xinhua quoted a State Planning Commission official as saying, noting that some 40 golf courses now under construction nationwide were soaking up more than 10 billion yuan (\$1.8 billion) in investment.

The existence of such projects, despite a similar freeze in mid-1993 and an overall clampdown on investment in

Lloyd's losing names but winning new backers

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Financial Markets

U.S. Dollar for International Markets			
Currency	New York Close	Tokyo Close	27/12/1994
Sterling Pound	1.5463	1.5435**	
Deutsche Mark	1.5793	1.5690	
Swiss Franc	1.3329	1.3360**	
French Franc	5.4525	5.4400**	
Japanese Yen	100.12	100.41	
European Currency Unit	1.2050	1.2050**	

Eurocurrency Interest Rates			
Currency	1 MTH	3 MTH	6 MTH
U.S. Dollar	5.75	6.12	6.48
Sterling Pound	5.68	6.06	6.62
Deutsche Mark	5.60	5.98	5.25
Swiss Franc	3.75	4.00	4.18
French Franc	5.56	5.93	6.35
Japanese Yen	2.04	2.12	2.18
European Currency Unit	6.00	6.25	6.50

Precious Metals			
Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Oz	Price
Gold	367.75	7.50	4.78
Silver	4.78	0.10	0.10

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin			
Currency	Bid	Offer	Date: 27/12/1994
U.S. Dollar	0.7050	0.7050	
Sterling Pound	1.0829	1.0833	
Deutsche Mark	0.4444	0.4466	
Swiss Franc	0.5265	0.5291	
French Franc	0.1218	0.1294	
Japanese Yen	0.0093	0.0098	
Dutch Guilder	0.3070	0.3090	
Swedish Krona	0.0458	0.0458	
Italian Lira	0.0458	0.0458	
Doglas Franc	0.0458	0.0458	

Other Currencies			
Currency	Bid	Offer	Date: 27/12/1994
Rahmeh Dinar	1.8490	1.8620	
Lebanese Lira	0.041330	0.042690	
Saudi Riyal	0.1860	0.1880	
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.3000	2.3000	
Qatari Riyal	0.1919	0.1932	
Egyptian Pound	0.2000	0.2150	
Omani Riyal	1.6870	1.6760	
UAE Dirham	0.1904	0.1917	
Greek Drachma	0.2232	0.2232	
Cypriot Pound	1.4050	1.5385	

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Jordan Handball Championship

Ahli overcome Arabi; Orthodoxi lose again

By Roufan Nahhas

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Al Ahli kept the lead after beating Al Arabi 31/21 Monday at the Sports Palace after the 11th week of the Kingdom's Handball Championship.

Al Ahli/Al Arabi: Al Ahli played with confidence to keep the lead with 20 points after an exciting match with Al Arabi who withdrew in the 20 minute of the second half.

Al Ahli kept a tight defence to stop Al Arabi's Ibrahim Buhairi and Moufag Fateh Allah from scoring. Meanwhile Al Ahli scored successfully depending on Hussein

Ahmad and Issa Abdullah to lead the attacks and end the first half with 17/15 win.

The second half witnessed Al Arabi's withdrawal whose attack were blocked by Al Ahli's solid defence who kept the pressure to end the match 31/21.

Al Arabi stayed in the second place with 18 points.

Al Salt/Amman: Meanwhile in another match Al Salt beat Amman 29/20 to stay in the third place with 10 points.

Al Salt's Jihad Qtaishat successfully marched through Amman's defence opening the way to his colleagues Imad Tadros and Mohammad Al Hindawi to

score and end the first half 13/9.

Amman tried in vain to pass through Al Salt's strong defence while Al Salt were free to continue scoring to end the match with 29/20 win.

Yarmouk Shouneh/

Standings after 11th week

	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Ahli	11	10	—	1	380	258	20
Arabi	10	9	—	1	302	258	18
Salt	10	5	—	5	296	295	10
Hussein	10	3	1	6	262	283	7
Y. Shouneh	10	3	1	6	297	331	7
Amman	9	3	—	6	219	250	6
Orthodoxi	10	1	—	9	261	336	2

★ Amman and Arabi have a postponed match.

Orthodoxi: Meanwhile in another match Y. Shouneh beat Orthodoxi 38/31 to move to the fourth place with Al Hussein with 7 points.

Al Orthodoxi remained last with 2 points.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

NSW Open organisers aim for Hingis

SYDNEY (AFP) — New South Wales Open organisers are delaying naming Jennifer Capriati as a wildcard for next month's tournament in the hope of getting Swiss teenager Martina Hingis into the main draw. The Sydney tournament, from January 9, is set to bring together for the first time 14-year-old Hingis with Capriati, the fallen teenage star in the second event of her comeback. Tournament director Barry Masters is keen to have both players in the draw despite having only one wildcard left after giving the other to Australia's Nicole Pietrangeli, the former Provis. As it stands Masters will give the free pass to Capriati, who collected her last tournament title here in 1993 before personal troubles persuaded her to give up. Hingis will travel with her schoolbooks and mother Melanie, a former ranked Czech player who named her after Martina Navratilova.

New York Ranger maced

NEW YORK (R) — Russian hockey star Sergei Zubov of the New York Rangers was walking with his wife and child near their home in Brooklyn when he was sprayed with mace tear gas. New York City Police said early Tuesday. Zubov, the leading scorer last season for the National Hockey League champion Rangers, was walking in the Brighton beach section of Brooklyn with his wife and daughter, who was in a carriage, when he got into a confrontation with several teenagers, police said. When one of the teenagers bumped into the carriage, Zubov, a six-foot-old, 200-pound (1.85 metres, 90 kg) 24-year-old from Moscow, told them to be careful. "Whereupon one of the teenagers, Gilbert Rosario, turned around and sprayed him with mace," said police spokesman James Coleman.

Roberts set to face Manchester United

LONDON (R) — Welsh international striker Iwan Roberts is set to make his first start for Leicester under new manager Mark McGhee against United at Old Trafford Wednesday night. Roberts came on as a late substitute and scored in the 2-1 defeat by Liverpool Monday after shaking off an attack of sciatica. McGhee tried and failed to sign Roberts two years ago when he was manager at Reading.

Kin of boy died after baseball drills win suit

TOKYO (R) — A Japanese court awarded 48.7 million yen (\$480,000) in damages Tuesday to the parents of a high school baseball player who collapsed during a grueling practice session and later died of heart failure. Tsuchihara Nihon University high school and the school's then-baseball coach were ordered to compensate the parents of Hiroyuki Saito after the local court concluded there was a link between his October 1988 death and the practice session. Saito, aged 16, collapsed during repeated 200-metre sprints. He was

taken to hospital but died of heart failure. The school, 70 km (42 miles) northeast of Tokyo, boasts one of its region's strongest baseball teams.

Salinas could miss Real Madrid clash

MADRID (R) — Spanish international striker Julio Salinas could be out of action for a month after injuring his right calf in a friendly between a Basque selection and Russia. The Deportivo Coruna star, a scorer in Spain's recent 4-1 victory over Belgium, now looks likely to miss the club's vital home clash with league leaders Real Madrid January 14. But he has not given up hope of playing. "At least my injury has come over the Christmas break," said the former Barcelona player. "I'm just hoping I'll be back in time for the visit of Madrid."

Lack of snow hits Crans Montana race

GENEVA (R) — Poor snow conditions continued to disrupt the Alpine Skiing World Cup calendar as organisers were forced Tuesday to postpone a men's downhill race set for the Swiss resort of Crans Montana January 6. An International Ski Federation official said efforts were being made to switch it and other postponed races elsewhere, but unseasonal weather in Europe was making it very difficult. But snow conditions had improved enough for a men's giant slalom to go ahead in the Slovenian resort of Kranjska Gor January A6. It was previously scheduled for December 22.

Former England captain May dies

LONDON (AFP) — Former England captain Peter May, widely regarded as his country's finest post-war batsman, died peacefully at home Tuesday after a short illness, four days before his 65th birthday. May played 66 Tests for England from 1951-61 and scored 4,537 runs at an average of 46.77 with a grace that made him one of the most attractive batsmen of his generation. He was also England's greatest captain but surprised many of his contemporaries by retiring from Test cricket at the early age of 31 and from the first-class game two years later. May continued to serve English cricket in a number of important capacities — as a selector and later as chairman of selectors, as president of MCC in 1980-81 and as an active member of the Surrey committee. British Prime Minister John Major, a lifelong follower of cricket and member of Surrey cricket club, said: "Peter May was one of the greatest batsmen English cricket has ever produced. He played cricket and life in a way few people could match. He will leave behind a legacy of personal and cricketing memories that many will treasure," he added. Test debut in 1951, against South Africa at his 13 test hundreds. His highest score was the 285 not out he made against the West Indies at Edgbaston in 1957. May captained England for a record 41 Tests, winning 20 and losing only 10. In his first-class career, from 1948-63, he totalled 27,592 runs at an average of 51.00 — a tally including 85 centuries.

Paris-Dakar Rally to set off

PARIS (AFP) — Hubert Auriol, who won the Paris-Dakar rally in 1992 when it finished in Cape Town, will flag off drivers in the 1995 race from the foot of the Eiffel Tower.

However, for the second year running the first competitive stage is raced at Grenada in Spain January 1. The rally sets sail for Africa from Spain to miss Algeria because of the terrorist trouble there. Auriol, now race director, won the rally twice on a motorbike before breaking both ankles in 1987 and switching to cars.

He has planned a 10,066km drive through five countries. The 14 timed stages on uncharted routes make up 6,169km and a speed limit has been imposed for driving through villages.

A satellite-linked computer the size of a shoe-box on every car and motorbike will ensure no-one can do a Mark Thatcher. The son of the former British premier gained the rally international attention when he got lost in the Sahara 10 years ago.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMARA HERSCHE
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A PESSIMIST'S PARADISE

East-West vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH
♠ 8 2
♥ 5 3 2
♦ 5 3 2
♣ 4 3 2

WEST EAST
♠ A Q 10 9 5 4 3 2 ♠ 7 6
♥ 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 ♥ 10 9 8 4 3
♦ Q ♦ 7 4
♣ A 8 7 6 ♣ A 10 9

SOUTH
♠ A K 8 7 6
♥ A K 10 9 6
♦ Q

The bidding:
South 1♣ West 2♣ North 3♣
1♣ 2♣ Pass Pass
4♣ Pass 5♣ Pass
Pass Pass

Opening lead: Six of ♠.

South nine tricks at no trump or 10 in a major suit score as much or more than 11 tricks in a minor, clubs and diamonds are all but forgotten in duplicate bridge for game purposes.

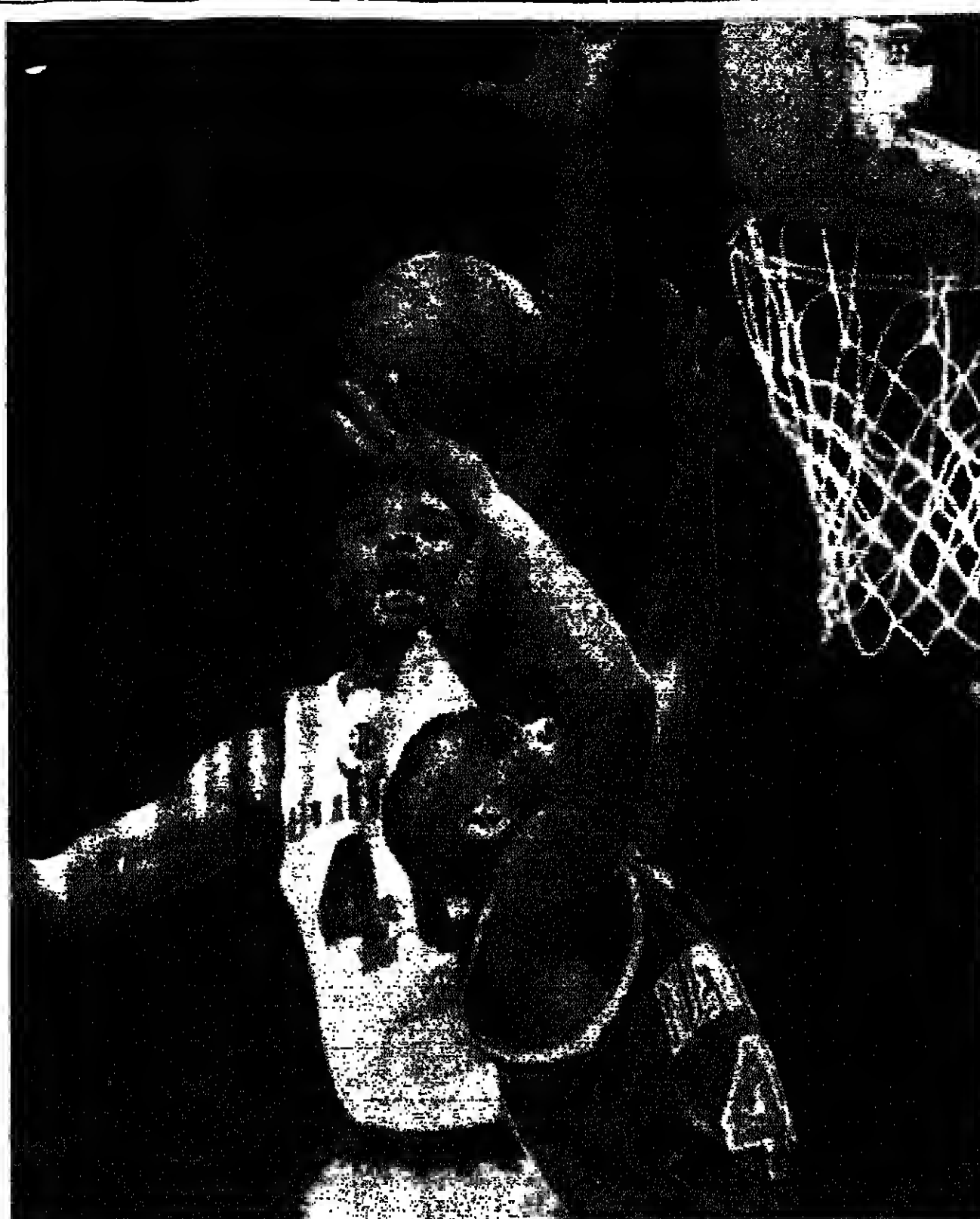
Partners, two of the best in the minors are still bid, but the feeling is you might as well bid a slam in a minor rather than settle for a pedestrian game.

That is not always correct. When this hand was dealt in a major national championship, those pairs who tried four hearts (the vast majority) met with their just deserts because of the bad break. At a few tables, South reached five diamonds and even that contract needed careful play.

West did well to refrain from leading spades, instead choosing a low club for the initial salvo. The declarer quickly banded the book, then continued with a third club for declarer to ruff.

Those declarers who view life through rose spectacles wasted no time in going down. They drew two rounds of trumps, then started on hearts. When West showed out on the second heart, two of declarer's losing hearts could be ruffed on the table, but declarer was still saddled with a heart loser.

The better technicians drew just one round of trumps, then cashed the two high hearts. Had both defenders followed, the last trump would have been drawn and the hearts established with two ruffs. As it was, when West showed out, but could not ruff, declarer was able to ruff all three heart losers on the table and bring home the contract.



Washington Bullets' Calbert Cheaney #40 (left) gets ready to block New York Knicks' Hubert Davis

Magic beat Bullets in overtime

LANDOVER, Maryland (R) — Anfernee Hardaway scored five of his 29 points in overtime to lift the Orlando Magic to their fourth straight victory, a 128-121 triumph over the slumping Washington Bullets Monday.

Nick Anderson scored a season-high 35 points and Shaquille O'Neal added 28 for the league-best Magic (21-3), who handed the Bullets their ninth loss in their last 10 outings. O'Neal fouled out late in the fourth quarter.

"I'm just happy to get out of here with a win," Orlando coach Brian Hill said. "The Bullets fought hard and did an outstanding job."

Rookie Juwan Howard had a season-high 24 points and 14 rebounds and Scott Skiles added 20 points for the short-handed Bullets.

The Bullets have been without scorers Don MacLean and Rex Chapman for several weeks and lost forward Chris Webber with a dislocated shoulder last week. Centre Kevin Duckworth sat out with a sore right groin.

Washington forced overtime by erasing a six-point deficit in the final 88 seconds.

"I'm not surprised at the way they played," Hardaway said. "They were loose. Even though they only had nine players, they all go out and play hard. They outplayed us in the first half. But to win in overtime, without Shaquille, that was big for us."

In Cleveland, Mark Price scored 28 of his season-high 36 points in the first half when the Cavaliers built a 15-point lead en route to their ninth straight win, 123-102 over the Boston Celtics.

Price hit a club-record seven 3-pointers despite not playing in the fourth quarter. He was 10-of-16 from the field, 7-of-9 from three-point range and a perfect 9-of-9 from the free throw line in 27 minutes of action.

"I always think I'm in the zone, once I hit my first shot," Price said. "Sometimes I am, and sometimes I'm not."

Sherman Douglas led Boston with a season-high 19 points.

At Minnesota, Pat Durham hit a 3-pointer with 22 seconds left, lifting the Timberwolves to an 82-81 victory over the Los Angeles Clippers in a meeting of the league's worst teams.

"We are the Timberwolves," said Durham, who scored eight points. "We don't rely on artistic performances. We'll take every win we can get, it doesn't matter."

Christian Laettner capped his season-high 26-point performance with two free throws in the closing seconds for Minnesota, which played without leading scorer Isiah Rider and won for just the sixth time in 25 games.

The team suspended Rider for one game for missing the morning practice.

Loy Vaught scored 20 points to pace the Clippers, who dropped their fifth straight and are a league-worst 3-23.

In Portland, Clarence Weatherspoon scored 21 of his 23 points in the second half, including the go-ahead basket with 1:17 to go, as the Philadelphia 76ers beat the Trail Blazers 101-94.

Dana Barros also scored 23 points and added 10 assists for the Sixers, who had lost five straight to Portland.

Rod Strickland had 26 points, nine rebounds and nine assists for Portland. Clyde Drexler added 25 points.

In Milwaukee, Eric Murdock came off the bench to score five of his 14 points during a decisive 13-1 third-quarter run as the Bucks snapped a four-game losing streak with a 101-97 victory over the New Jersey Nets.

Vin Baker led the Bucks with 26 points and Glenn Robinson added 25.

Chris Morris scored a season-high 28 points and Kenny Anderson added 23 and 12 assists for the Nets, who cut the deficit to two in the fourth quarter but could get no closer.

In Phoenix, Kevin Johnson scored 20 points and Charles Barkley and Dan Majerle added 19 apiece to lead eight scorers in double figures as the Suns extended their franchise-record home winning streak to 25 games with a 139-113 rout of the Dallas Mavericks.

The Suns improved to 14-0 at home this season and own the best record in the Western Conference at 20-6.

Barkley also had 12 rebounds and had eight assists.

Jim Jackson scored a game-high 28 points and Jamal Mashburn added 21 for the Mavs, who lost their third straight.

In Seattle, Sam Perkins poured in a season-high 26 points and Detlef Schrempf scored 12 of his 21 points in the first quarter as the SuperSonics routed the Sacramento Kings 123-103 to extend their home winning streak to 12 straight.

The Sonics won their 12th in 14 games.

Brian Grant scored 23 points for the Kings, who trailed throughout.

In Miami, Hakeem Olajuwon had 24 points and 12 rebounds and Mario Elie scored 19 points, including his team's first 11 points of the fourth quarter, as the Houston Rockets beat the Heat 101-88.

Knicks' Oakley to have surgery

New York Knicks All-Star forward Charles Oakley will undergo surgery to correct a congenital dislocation of his second right toe.

Oakley is expected to be sidelined four to eight weeks — more bad news for the Eastern Conference champion Knicks who are struggling this season with a five-game losing streak and a mediocre 12-12 record.

"It's just too much," Oakley said of the pain in his toe after scoring 20 points in New York's 107-104 loss in Chicago Christmas Day. "I might as well get it over with."

The 31-year-old Oakley missed four games before returning to the starting lineup last Thursday in a 93-90 loss to Cleveland. He has been bothered by the injury since the pre-season.

Oakley was fitted with a specially-fitted padded sneaker to alleviate the pain in his toe after missing four games. But he returned to his old sneaker for the Christmas Day game after complaining the special sneaker left his ankle vulnerable.

Oakley's streak of 268 straight games played came to an end 11 days ago when he missed New York's 94-84 win at Sacramento. He had not missed a game since April 12, 1991, when he sat out with a sore right knee.

Oakley is averaging 12.5 points and 11.1 rebounds in 20 games this season. He averaged 11.8 points and 11.8 rebounds in helping New York reach the NBA finals last season.

RESULTS

Cleveland	123	Boston	102
Houston	101	Miami	88
Orlando	128	Washington	121 (OT)
Minnesota	82	La Clippers	81
Milwaukee	101	New Jersey	97
Phoenix	139	Dallas	113
Philadelphia	101	Portland	94
Seattle	123	Sacramento	103

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Vikings end 49ers' winning streak to take NFC Central title

MINNEAPOLIS (R) — The Minnesota Vikings, with more at stake but without their top quarterback, won the NFC Central division title with a 21-14 victory over the league-leading San Francisco 49ers Monday night.

Dewayne Washington returned a fumble 18 yards for a touchdown and Fuad Revez kicked two field goals as the Vikings (10-6), who rested injured quarterback Warren Moon, won their second division title in three years. They will host the Chicago Bears in a wild-card round playoff game Sunday.

Sean Salisbury, who had not taken a snap this season, started in place of Moon.

The 49ers (13-3), who had already clinched the NFC West and home field advantage throughout the entire playoffs, saw their 10-game winning streak come to an end.

San Francisco benched starting quarterback Steve Young and receivers Jerry Rice and John Taylor early in the second quarter and lost for the first time since October 2, against Philadelphia.

"I think it was the longest quarter of my coaching experience, the way Steve was taking those shots," San Francisco coach George Seifert said.

"I hate games like this," said Rice. "I felt I was getting into a groove and then I sat down."

Salisbury completed 16-of-34 passes for 156 yards. His 38-yard pass to Qadry Ismail set up a one-yard touchdown run by Terry Allen that gave Minnesota a 21-7 lead with nine seconds left in the third quarter.

"I'm just grateful I got a chance, and guys stuck with me," Salisbury said.

"Sean Salisbury did a solid job," Green said. "I think any time you go out and do your job as a backup quarterback, it's to operate the offense, get the team in the end zone any chance you can, try to win the ballgame. It was his first opportunity this year and he did a good job."

Washington picked up a fumble by Ricky Waters and scooted 17 yards for a touchdown with 10:07 left in the first quarter to give Minnesota a 7-0 lead.

"I just happened to be in the right place at the right time," said Washington, who tied the rookie record for touchdowns by a defensive player with three. "I'm glad things worked out for me."

Revez kicked field goals of 48 and 27 yards, extending his streak of consecutive field goals to 28, one behind the record set by John Carney of the San Diego Chargers in 1993.

Revez kicked field goals of 48 and 27 yards, extending his streak of consecutive field goals to 28, one behind the record set by John Carney of the San Diego Chargers in 1993.

Young completed 12-of-13 passes for 84 yards, including a six-yard touchdown toss to Rice on the first play of the second quarter that tied it, 7-7.

It was the 139th career touchdown for Rice, who caught four passes for 33 yards to move one past Steve Largent into second place on the all-time receptions list with 820. Art Monk of the New York Jets is the all-time leader with 934.

Revez kicked a 49-yard field goal on the final play of the first half to give Minnesota the lead for good at 10-7. He added a 27-yarder midway through the third period to boost the lead to 13-7.

Revez tied Chuck Foreman's 1975 club record for points in a season with 132. Minnesota receiver Cris Carter caught three passes for 24 yards, extending his NFL single-season receptions record to 132.

Allen ran for the two-point conversion after his touchdown to give the Vikings a 14-point lead.

Elvis Grbac, who replaced Young in the second quarter, threw a one-yard touchdown pass to Ed McCaffrey with 3:53 remaining. Grbac was 18-of-23 for 184 yards and one interception.

Green was optimistic Moon would be ready next week.

"We're hopeful that the progress Warren Moon has made last week, he'll make the same kind of progress this week," Green said. "If he does, there is a good chance he will be able to play Sunday."

Asked if he would be ready should moon still be sidelined, Salisbury said: "Have to. If he plays it's just a feather in our cap, because

he had such a wonderful year. If he isn't, I have the responsibility to my teammates and myself to be ready for it."

Eagles fire head coach

The Philadelphia Eagles fired Rich Kotite as head coach Monday.

No successor was named, but Dick Vermeil, the only coach to take the Eagles to the Super Bowl, has been reported to be considering returning to the team he quit 12 years ago due to "burn-out."

Eagles owner Jeffrey Lurie met with Kotite Monday morning and then said they mutually decided to part ways.

Rich Kotite and the Philadelphia Eagles have decided to part company," Lurie said at a news conference at Veterans Stadium.

"Rich Kotite will no longer be the head coach of the Philadelphia Eagles. All aspects of his contract will be honored. He is free to pursue head coaching opportunities."

Kotite has been mentioned as a candidate for the head coaching job with the expansion Carolina Panthers.

"Coaches are hired to be fired," said Kotite, who had a year left on his contract. "I

don't know if I agree with that but I have the warmest feelings for everybody in this organization."

Kotite has been under fire since the middle of the season, even when the Eagles were 7-2 and contending for first place in the NFC East. The Eagles skidded down the stretch, losing their last seven games to fall out of the playoff picture at 7-9.

The Philadelphia Inquirer reported Sunday that Vermeil is considering an offer from Lurie to serve as the team's general manager or general manager and coach.

According to the Inquirer, the 58-year-old Vermeil met for three hours with Lurie Friday.

"I went into the meeting without an interest, and I came out of the meeting with an interest," Vermeil told the newspaper. "We discussed the possibilities of general manager or general manager and coach."

Vermeil, who coached the Eagles from 1976 through 1982, said he and Lurie agreed to consider the offer for a week or two before making a decision.

Vermeil, a college football analyst for ABC Sports, compiled a 54-47 record with the Eagles and guided the team to Super Bowl 15, where they were beaten by the Oakland Raiders 27-10.

NFL Standings American Football Conference

Eastern Division					
	W	L	T	PF	PA
Miami(Y)	10	6	0	389	327
New England (X)	10	6	0	351	312
Indianapolis	8	8	0	307	320
Buffalo	7	9	0	340	356
NY Jets	6	10	0	264	329
Central Division					
	W	L	T	PF	PA
Pittsburgh(Y)	12	4	0	316	234
Cleveland (X)	11	5	0	340	204
Cincinnati	3	13	0	276	406
Houston	2	14	0	226	352
Western Division					
	W	L	T	PF	PA
San Diego(Y)	11	5	0	381	306
Kansas City(X)	9	7	0	319	295
La Raiders	9	7	0	303	327
Denver	7	9	0	347	396
Seattle	6	10	0	287	323

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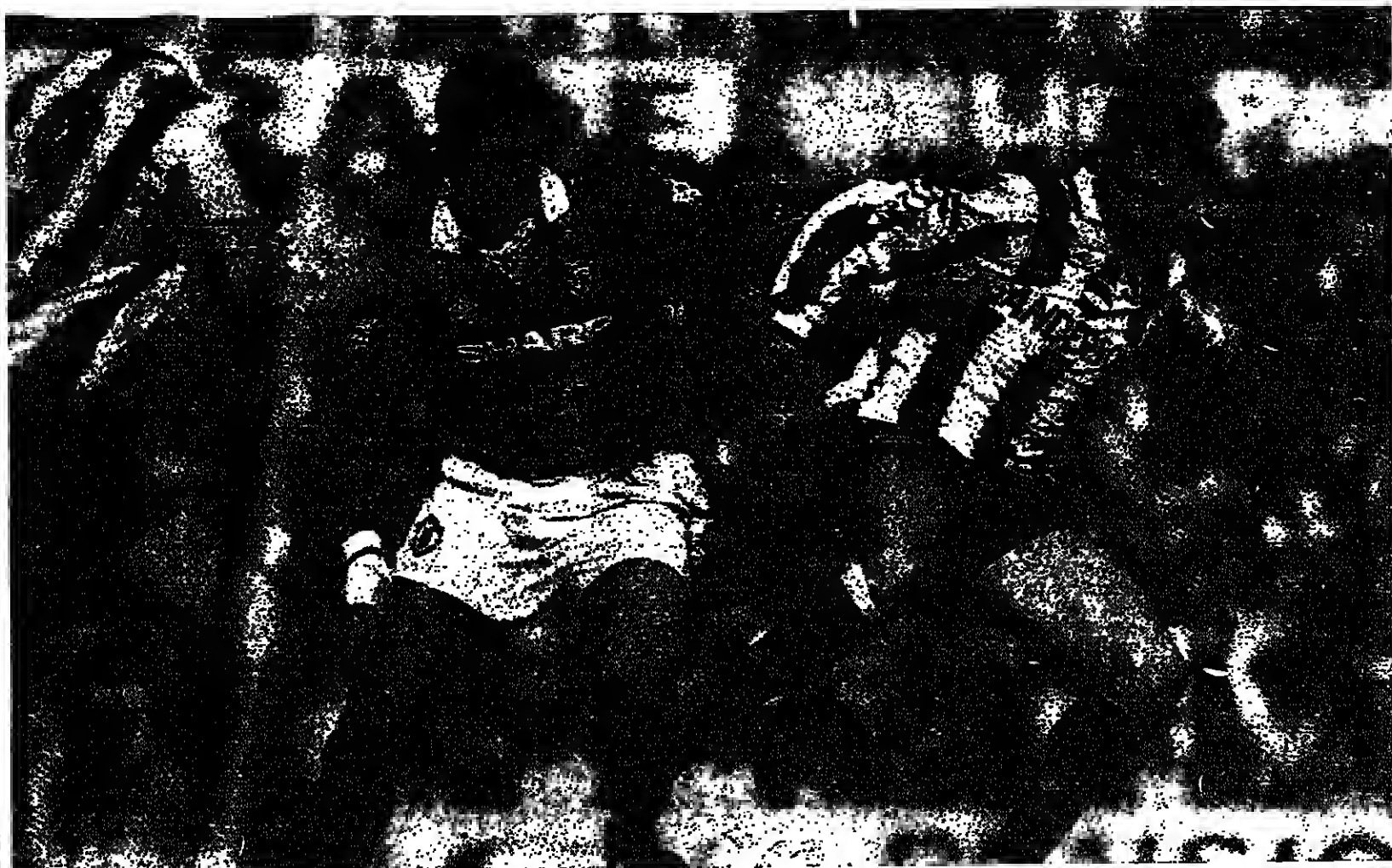
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Manchester United's Eric Cantona (centre) tries to keep control of the ball as he is blocked by two defenders (AFP photo)

Blackburn end United's shortlived joy

LONDON (AFP) — Blackburn Rovers made a quick return to the top of the English Premiership Monday night with a 3-1 win at Manchester City after reigning champions Manchester United had led the table for just seven hours following a 3-2 victory at Chelsea earlier in the day.

Rovers, without manager Kenny Dalglish who is recovering from an appendix operation, took the lead early in a frenetic first half through Alan Shearer's 20th goal of the season.

Mark Atkins put them further front before Niall Quinn reduced the deficit with a trademark header after just 20 minutes.

But any hope of a City fightback were killed off midway through a dull second-half when England full-back Graham Le Saux curled a brilliant free-kick from 25 yards over the defensive wall and beyond the helpless reach of Andy Dibble.

Manchester United, beaten twice in the league by Glenn Hoddle's side last sea-

son, appeared to be cruising to a comfortable victory at Stamford Bridge after a Mark Hughes goal and an Eric Cantona penalty had put them in front.

But a penalty by Scottish international John Spencer and Eddie Newton's first goal for two years 12 minutes from time set up the possibility of a thrilling reversal. But only for a minute.

While Chelsea were still celebrating their remarkable comeback, Irish international Roy Keane broke free on the left and set up Brian McClair who swept in his first league goal for 14 weeks.

Chelsea, though, refused to accept defeat and only a superb save from Gary Walsb minutes from the end from substitute Mark Stein kept United in front.

United manager Alex Ferguson was clearly relieved that his side emerged from Chelsea's second-half assault with all three points.

"It nearly turned into a disaster, which I couldn't envisage at 2-0 up. In the first half, we were superb, and

maybe getting the penalty so early in the second half caused us to relax and get careless," he said.

As speculation mounts about his possible transfer to Nottingham Forest in exchange for the younger Stan Collymore, Mark Hughes posted a timely reminder of his value to United.

The veteran Welshman, whose age and nationality may make him surplus to Alex Ferguson's requirements in rebuilding a side capable of challenging for European honours, opened the scoring with a typically bullish effort.

With perfect timing he slid into the box to meet Ryan Giggs's lofted cross for his first league goal in two months and only his fourth of the season.

Cantona stretched United's lead seconds after the break after Keane was crudely challenged by Frank Sinclair before Gary Pallister's equally bovine treatment of Stein allowed Spencer to blast home from the penalty spot.

Newton's far-post header looked to have sealed a superb fightback by the Londoners before the efforts of Keane and McClair ensured that Chelsea's joy was only short-lived.

Liverpool goalkeeper

David James saved a penalty and pulled off a superb injury-time save to help the Merseysiders to a 2-1 victory at lowly Leicester.

James saved Steve Thompson's 63rd minute spotkick, after John Barnes had tripped Lee Philpott inside the box, and then only seconds from the final whistle spread himself to keep out a point-blank effort from Mark Blake.

Four minutes later Liverpool took the lead through a Robbie Fowler penalty, after John Scales was pushed inside the box.

The Merseysiders extended their lead on 77 minutes, when Fowler and Barnes combined for Ian Rush to prod home at the near post.

Leicester were reduced to ten men towards the end when Simon Grayson was sent off for his second bookable offence but still managed to reduce the deficit when Iwan Roberts rose to meet Mark Draper's free-kick.

Newcastle, with only one victory in their previous five matches, endured a frustrating afternoon with a goalless encounter at Leeds but despite a far greater share of possession and goal opportunities they failed to capitalise.

Two goals from Guy Whit-

tingham on his Sheffield Wednesday debut and one apiece from Mark Bright and the Swede Klas Inngesson — his first for the club — put an end to Joe Royle's eight-match unbeaten start as Everton manager.

Duncan Ferguson, playing his first game since his £4 million move from Glasgow Rangers, put Everton ahead before the Merseysiders were overruled.

Nottingham Forest also had to be satisfied with a 0-0 draw, at Coventry, after skipper Stuart Pearce hit the crossbar with a 20th-minute penalty.

Tottenham enjoyed their first away win under Gerry Francis with a 2-0 win at Norwich in a game that they should have won by a far greater margin.

Nick Barnby set Spurs on their way after 11 minutes when he swept home Darren S. Anderson's cross from 10 yards and though the Londoners dominated through-out they failed to make the best of their chances until Teddy Sheringham struck two minutes from time.

Republic of Ireland skipper Andy Townsend suffered a miserable return from a six-game suspension when he was sent off after an hour's play in Aston Villa's 0-0 draw with Arsenal at Highbury.

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Thursday (10 am - 1.30 pm)
Friday and Saturday Closed

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NEWS IN BRIEF

UAE's federal advisory council reconvenes

ABU DHABI (R) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) reconvened its consultative Federal National Council (FNC) on Tuesday, the official Amiriya news agency reported. The 40-member FNC is made up of nominees by the UAE's seven emirates. It usually convenes towards the end of the year and its last full session was last summer, an official said. The FNC, which has equivalents in other Gulf Arab states, meets in public and examines draft laws before they are ratified by the UAE's president, Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan. It has no power of veto but when it is in session it can call on ministers to reconsider draft laws and make amendments. The FNC was set up in 1972, shortly after the formation of the UAE from what were previously British protectorates.

Tanker captain awaits UAE collision report

ABU DHABI (R) — The captain of an oil tanker ruptured in a collision with another ship in March is being kept in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) until investigators report on the accident, a British official said on Tuesday. Lau Chung-Hui, 45, has had his British passport taken away and is not allowed to leave the UAE, said Trevor Lewis, third secretary at the British embassy in Dubai. He is staying in a hotel in Dubai, waiting for the report to be made to the prosecutor in the UAE emirate of Fujairah. Captain Lau was master of the Seki, a Panama-registered supertanker which shed thousands of tonnes of oil into the sea off Fujairah after a collision with the smaller UAE-owned Baynunah in March. "We hope (the prosecutor) makes a positive decision and Captain Lau is released soon," Mr. Lewis told Reuters by telephone. Mr. Lewis said he did not know when the investigators might submit their report and added: "We hope it's soon." The government of Fujairah could claim damages if one of the parties is found responsible for the accident, which led to oil from the Seki washing ashore and blackening a stretch of Indian Ocean coastline. Both ships have been repaired since the accident and are sailing again, a shipping source said.

Thieves of Baghdad rob ambassador's house

BAGHDAD (R) — Thieves handcuffed an Asian ambassador and burglarised his Baghdad house days after he fled a previous raid and threatened to close his embassy unless the government provided protection, a newspaper said on Tuesday. Babel, the paper run by President Saddam Hussein's eldest son Uday, did not give the diplomat's name or nationality. "The house of an Asian ambassador came under armed assault but he managed to flee through the window and head for the Foreign Ministry asking for protection for his house," the paper reported. It said the diplomat threatened to close the embassy and leave for his home country if protection was not provided. But after some days, while he was still waiting for protection, armed thieves struck again, handcuffed and gagged him and burglarised his house, the paper said. It gave no further details.

Indonesia to send 180,000 pilgrims to S. Arabia

JAKARTA (R) — Indonesia, home to the world's largest Muslim population, plans to send 180,000 people to Saudi Arabia next year on the annual Hajj pilgrimage, Transportation Minister Haryanto Danutirto said on Tuesday. Mr. Danutirto told reporters after meeting President Suharto the number who had registered for the trip was higher than this year's 163,000 pilgrims. "We need 24 charter airplanes to carry those people, we already have an agreement for 13 airplanes," he said. About 350 Indonesians died on the pilgrimage in 1994, mostly because of illness. Five others were killed during a stampede near Mecca.

Mufti to denounce terrorism on U.S. visit

CAIRO (AFP) — The mufti of Egypt, Sheikh Sayed Tantawi, will give talks on Islam's rejection of terrorism during a 10-day visit to the United States beginning on Monday, the government daily Al-Ahram reported. The mufti is known for his moderate views, in contrast with the imam of Al-Azhar, the highest Sunni Muslim authority, Sheikh Gad Al-Haq Ali Gad Al-Haq. The mufti, who has been invited by the Anglican Church, will attend a series of seminars under the theme "Islam and Peace" and will talk about "Islam's rejection of terrorism," the daily said. Around 540 people have died since militants began a campaign in March 1992 aimed at overthrowing the Egyptian government.

1 killed, another injured in Tehran bank raid

TEHRAN (AFP) — Two gunmen attacked a bank in the Iranian capital, fatally wounding the security guard and injuring a female employee, official sources said Tuesday. The attack occurred Monday on a branch of the Bank-e-Melli (national bank) in Seyed Jafar al-Asadabadi street in northern Tehran. The gunmen escaped after a shoot-out with the security guard, who was critically hurt and died later in hospital.

Wife batters husband for refusing to celebrate

CAIRO (AFP) — An Egyptian woman battered her husband almost to death after he said he would not take her out to celebrate the New Year, Al-Ahram daily reported. The 27-year-old woman told police she could not control her fury when her husband said he did not have enough money to go out on New Year's Eve. She attacked him with a "big stick" as he lay in bed and beat him until neighbours broke down the door to save him, the paper said. The woman is being kept in custody until her husband decides whether to press charges against her, it added.

Somali group calls for Islamic government

MOGADISHU (AFP) — Somalia's largest Islamic organisation, the Al-Ithad Al-Islami (Unity of Islam), Tuesday appealed to the Somalis not to recognise any future government in the country if it was not based on the Islamic law. "We will support only an Islamic government based on the Koran," said Ahmad Bile Hassan, the information officer for the organisation. He, however, ruled out an Algerian-style armed struggle against any government by the Unity of Islam. "We will just withhold our cooperation," he added. Somalia has been without a government since the overthrow of dictator Mohammed Siad Barre in 1991 and efforts by the United Nations to bring different factions together to discuss the establishment of a government of national unity have failed. The Somalia National Alliance (SNA) faction led by Mohammed Farah Aidede said earlier this month may soon form a government in Mogadishu, after an on-going "national conference" convened by General Aidede last month. Gen. Aidede's rival, Ali Mahdi Mohammed, warned that the formation of government by the SNA leader would lead to the intensification of inter-clan warfare the strife-torn Horn of Africa country. Al-Ithad has supported the establishment of Islamic courts which have been dispensing the sharia law, including ordering amputations for thieves and floggings for adultery in northern Mogadishu. An Islamic court recently ordered the stoning to death of man accused of raping a woman.

Bahraini opposition calls for dialogue

NICOSIA (Agencies) — Two hunched Bahraini opposition groups on Tuesday called on the government to open dialogue with Shiite Muslim protest leaders to end conflict which has left an estimated 15 people dead in the Gulf state.

"The only way out of the crisis consists of opening a dialogue with the Islamic figures over their demands, and to free all people arrested during the riots," the Popular Front and the National Front said in a joint statement received here.

"Resorting to ambiguous methods will not help the problem, because it is ignoring the Bahraini people's political and economic demands that led to the crisis."

Another opposition group, the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain, said police arrested some 2,200 people during two weeks of violence between Shiite Muslims and security forces which erupted after the detention of Shiite cleric Sheikh Ali Salman on Dec. 5.

The sheikh had demanded the restoration of parliament, suspended since 1975.

It was the worst violence in Bahrain since the former British protectorate became independent in 1971.

The clashes left 15 dead, eleven demonstrators and four policemen, according to the opposition, but authorities only reported the death of one person, a policeman.

Lorry-loads of riot police on Tuesday posted on the outskirts of the main Shiite Muslim areas in Bahrain to prevent further clashes, said witnesses contacted by telephone from Cyprus.

Bahraini authorities say Shiites make up 35 per cent of the population, but independent sources have put the figure at between 55 and 60 per cent.

Iran's ambassador to Bahrain, Jawad Turk Abadi, has left for Tehran to attend a gathering of Iranian envoys in the region, an Iranian embassy spokeswoman said.

The spokeswoman said Mr. Abadi left Manama on Saturday night and was due to return next Saturday.

Mr. Abadi's departure followed Bahrain's recall of its ambassador in Tehran, Sami Khalil Al Moayyed, for consultation. Mr. Moayyed returned to Bahrain last Thursday.

The move has triggered rumours of souring relations between Iran and Bahrain.

But the embassy spokeswoman said: "Abadi's departure has no link with anything whatsoever. He is coming back next Saturday."

Bahrain's prime minister, Sheikh Khalifa Bin Salman Al Khalifa, told Bahraini businessmen on Sunday that a group from abroad had tried to stir up street violence "to disrupt the peace, stability and brotherhood of Bahrain's single family."



Sultan Qaboos Ben Said of Oman exchanges Gulf state. Mr. Rabin returned to Israel saying he was encouraged to continue the Middle East Rabin in Moscow, during the first-ever visit by peace process on Monday (AFP photo)

Gulf states edge towards formal ties with Israel

DUBAI (AFP) — Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin made a surprise visit to Oman on Monday for talks with Sultan Qaboos: in the first ever trip to a Gulf Arab state by a head of government from the Jewish state.

Mr. Rabin secretly left Tel Aviv for Oman early Monday on board an air force plane with his military advisor General Danny Yatom and cabinet chief Shimon Sheves.

The three returned to Israel at dawn Tuesday. Israel had no diplomatic ties with any of the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) members — Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates.

But Israeli television said the Jewish state could establish ties with Oman at the level of interest sections early next year.

The official Omani News Agency (ONA) said: "The Omani sovereign and the Israeli prime minister met to give a boost to the Middle East peace process and to support efforts to secure a comprehensive and fair peace in the region."

Their meeting came as part of "Oman's support for the peace process, for the Israeli-Palestinian accord and that concluded between Israel and Jordan" on Oct. 26, the agency added.

Oman and the rest of the GCC lifted the indirect economic boycott of firms dealing with Israel at the end of September.

"This visit proves that the Sultanate of Oman, like the other Gulf monarchies, is well underway in the process of normalisation with Israel," an Arab diplomat in Bahrain told AFP.

plomat in Bahrain told AFP.

"Oman has always adopted a sharply different attitude to Israel than its GCC partners," the diplomat added.

Oman was the only Gulf country not to break off ties with Egypt after it signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1979, he pointed out.

But now "everything has changed since the (1990-91) Gulf crisis, and the Gulf countries who were hesitant seem to accept the idea of establishing ties with Israel," he said.

Saudi Arabia's highest religious authority, mufti Sheikh Abdul Aziz Ben Baz, said for the first time last week that a "permanent peace between Arabs and Israelis" was possible.

The sheikh also said he was not opposed to Muslims visiting holy sites in Israeli-annexed East Jerusalem.

The Arab diplomat said the mufti's comments "reflect the Saudi government's point of view, which does not dare, however, to speak in aloud in case it further stirs up the conflict between it and Islamic fundamentalists."

Kuwaiti Emir Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah said in October that diplomatic ties with Israel were possible once peace was secured in the Middle East.

Israel's Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin said during a visit to Oman last month that diplomatic relations between Israel and several Arab countries could be established in "the very near future."

An Israeli foreign ministry official said at the time

Rabbani ready for truce, not resignation

KABUL (AFP) — Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani has declared a unilateral ceasefire in war-torn Kabul, but has not announced his expected resignation from office, an official presidential spokesman said Tuesday.

"President Rabbani has reiterated that he is ready to step down, but he believes a unilateral transfer of power will not solve Afghanistan's problems," Mr. Rabbani's press spokesman Abdul Aziz Morad said.

The statement came after senior pro-Rabbani officials had indicated that he would likely step down at the end of his two-year term of office late this month.

But observers here said the fact that Mr. Rabbani would not resign unless a legitimate interim body to assure a transfer of power had been agreed upon, was not a new development as this had always been his stated position.

But it still remains to be seen whether the president's main rival, Hesh-e-Islami faction leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, will agree to Mr. Rabbani remaining in office after the Dec. 29 deadline, they said.

"The state has called on the opposition to nominate a delegation for talks on a formula for the transfer of power and agreement on a new leader," declared Mr. Morad.

It is understood that a delegation sent by Mr. Rabbani will meet with a similar body from Mr. Hekmatyar's camp Tuesday in order to discuss these issues.

Mr. Morad expressed his disappointment with the United Nations, whose special representative Mahmud Mstun has been trying — unsuccessfully — to resolve the Afghan leadership crisis.

"We have waited for the U.N. to come up with a formula for a solution to the Afghan problems, but they have not," Mr. Morad said.

Foreign analysts agree that without a permanent high-ranking presence in Kabul, the U.N. cannot exert leverage over the various warring Afghan factions who are now showing greater readiness to negotiate than at any time in the past.

Despite the fact that a small colony of foreign aid workers and journalists has permanently stayed in Kabul through the 30 months of in-fighting since the rebels captured the Afghan capital in April 1992, the U.N. has always cited the lack of security here as a reason for staying away.

The announcement of a "permanent ceasefire" by the pro-Rabbani side may lure the United Nations back to Kabul, where the war-weary citizens face the trials of a cold and hungry winter.

Foreign aid workers in Kabul hope that a mutual agreement on a ceasefire might also lead to an end of the military blockade by Mr. Rabbani's opposition forces.

COLUMN

China's MPs want minimum education funding level

HONG KONG (AFP) — Chinese lawmakers have called for a minimum state funding level for education to be set into law and for the establishment of private schools, in a bid to ease chronic cash shortages in the country's educational system, a report said Monday. Qu Geping, a member of the National People's Congress (NPC; parliament) standing committee that discussed the draft education law, said the proportion of gross national product (GNP) devoted to education should be stipulated in the bill, the Xinhua News Agency said. "Current funds, or 2.66 per cent of the GNP, can never meet the demand of educating the Chinese people," he was quoted by the official agency as saying in a dispatch monitored here. Qu also proposed a special education tax and called for more schools to be set up by individuals and organisations in a bid to draw more money into the education system. The draft law would allow the establishment of private schools, but leaves the drawing up of "specific regulations" to China's cabinet, the State Council, the dispatch added. But some legislators warned that if the proposal to allow private schools were adopted by the NPC, schools would be carefully scrutinised to prevent profiteers from using the ruling to "make exorbitant profits," Xinhua said. "Most lawmakers have been worried about teachers whose salaries have been delayed or have even gone unpaid by some local governments, something which is becoming quite common across the country," Xinhua said.

Simpson enjoying special privileges in jail

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — Football star O.J. Simpson, who is on trial for murder, is enjoying special treatment in jail including daily showers and unlimited weekend visitors, the Los Angeles Times reported Monday. The report said most inmates such as Simpson who are in isolation also are given just one hour weekly in the crowded visitors' room, while Simpson is allowed unlimited no-contact visits with girlfriend Paula Barbieri. Some public defenders are up in arms at the special treatment given the former football star and actor, the paper reported, as their often poor clients get anything but kid-gloves treatment from the judicial system. Simpson also was allowed to welcome visitors on Christmas, while the 6,000 other prisoners at the Los Angeles County Men's Central Jail had no such holiday privilege, the Times said. Citing records and interviews, the newspaper also said Simpson was given unlimited use of the attorney visiting area on weekends, was allowed to sleep later than other prisoners and could use about 14 hours daily outside his cell for exercise, watching television or making telephone calls.

Tokyo to compensate for aircraft noise

TOKYO (AFP) — The Japanese government was ordered by a court to pay 181 million yen (\$1.8 million) to 213 residents living near an airport in compensation for distress caused by noise from military aircraft. But the high court in Kanazawa, a provincial city northwest of Tokyo, rejected a plea from the residents to halt Japanese and U.S. military flights using the Komatsu Base near the Sea of Japan. Presiding Judge Aruko Sasamori said the operation of Japanese military craft comes under the jurisdiction of the state minister for defence, and cannot be contested in a civil suit. She also refused to pass any judgement on a high political argument by the plaintiffs, who claim the very existence of Japan's self-defence forces is unconstitutional. Japan's post-World War II constitution renounces war and bans the use of force in settling an international conflict. Anti-war activists have led a campaign to discredit the self-defence forces as unconstitutional.

Israel draws new borders on W. Bank

MAALE ADUMIM, occupied West Bank (AFP) — Brick by brick, Israel is extending greater Jerusalem and marking out its future borders in the occupied West Bank by establishing new facts on the ground.

More and more smart red-roofed houses dot the barren hill overlooking the Jerusalem-Jericho road. An entire district threaded with streets with Biblical names has appeared in Maale Adumim, six kilometres from Jerusalem.

The dormitory town was founded in 1982 under a rightwing Israeli government which wanted to annex the whole of the West Bank.

But it has also flourished since July 1992 under the Labour government of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, which pledged in the 1993 declaration of principles to launch limited Palestinian self-rule in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

In the past two years 5,000 Israelis attracted by easy access to mortgages have moved to Maale Adumim, making it the largest Jewish settlement in the occupied territories, with a total of 20,000 inhabitants and 4,500 homes.

"The freeze on settlements ordered by the Rabin government has never concerned us," said the municipal authority's spokeswoman, Orit Eliash.

"Our settlement is backed

by a consensus of opinion in Israel, and the state wants to bolster the Jewish presence around Jerusalem."

The town authorities want to expand it further by doubling the number of inhabitants in the next years and building 5,000 more homes.

Maale Adumim's main problem is that it is situated in the occupied West Bank and not in East Jerusalem, which Israel seized and "annexed" in 1967.

Israel and the Palestinians are currently negotiating the extension of Palestinian self-rule over the West Bank and a redeployment of Israeli troops away from urban areas ahead of Palestinian elections.

Limited autonomy was launched in Gaza and the Jericho enclave in May.

"Our efforts are aimed at linking Maale Adumim to Jerusalem so we will not come under the power of the Palestinian Authority," mayor Benny Kachriel told AFP.

In October the town moved closer to its goal by extending its area by six square kilometres, to 50 sq kilometres. It now branches from Jerusalem to the Dead Sea.

Construction is also booming in most settlements within a 10-15 kilometre radius of Jerusalem, and in the eastern sector of the Holy City, ringing the old Arab districts.

The construction of around



10,000 new homes will start in 1995 in East Jerusalem, where a whole new district called Har Homa will be created.

"Israel is pushing back its boundaries with bulldozers," Palestinian geographer Hali Tufakji said bitterly. Mr. Tufakji marks in minute detail on his maps the daily pattern of Jewish settlement.

"Even if settlement is not pressing ahead everywhere at the same pace, the Jewish state is continuing to nibble

away at our land," he told AFP.

Outside "greater" Jerusalem, the Israeli building boom is mainly following the old ceasefire line between Israel and Jordan, such as at Alfei Menashe, a residential district of 4,000 inhabitants perched on a hill 15 kilometres east of Tel Aviv.

"We were very worried when Labour came to power, but confidence has returned," said the municipal spokesman, Barz Hui.

"The construction of 150 houses, which had been frozen, has just been authorised by the government. Demand is very high and prices have already risen by 10 per cent."

Optimism has also returned to Ariel, a settlement of 13,000 inhabitants deeper inside the West Bank.

"The government has authorised the construction of 140 homes and 100 were sold in four days. People do not believe that Ariel could be dismantled one day," said municipal spokeswoman Sandra Baraz.

Mr. Rabin has rejected Palestinian demands to evict settlers from the occupied territories during the five-year interim period of self-rule, but his government has announced a freeze on new construction.

The issue of settlements and the future of Jerusalem will be discussed in negotiations on the final status of the Palestinian territories, due to start in May 1996.

In the heart of the West Bank, Jewish settlers are getting round the government freeze by building new homes with private finance and pushing back enclosure fences.

In Hebron, where a Jewish extremist massacred more than 30 Palestinians in February, settlers have announced the launch of two new construction projects financed by private donations.